AN EPISTEMIC JUSTICE ACCOUNT OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF FEEDBACK

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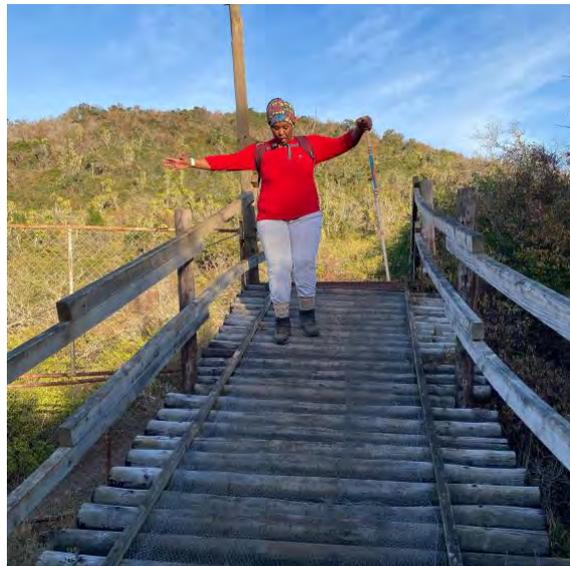
Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently - Maya Angelou

I speak to the Black experience, but I am always talking about the human condition -- about what we can endure, dream, fail at and survive - Maya Angelou

It is beyond doubt that all our knowledge begins with experiences - Immanuel Kant

Everything that is past is either a learning experience to grow, or a beautiful memory to reflect on, or a motivating factor to act upon - Denis Waitely

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I saw you for the first time at a HELTASA Conference that was held at UJ many years ago. I was in your audience when you presented. I admired you from a distance. Little did I know that you will be my doctoral supervisor. I tell the story of how you came to be my supervisor in my book chapter 'Close encounters: Becoming resilient through compassion and imagination' (Vilakazi, 2016). I did not know what to say to you when I met you at the first doc week. I wanted to hide. Today we are in a place where we can discuss the theories that I used in my study. We can also talk about other things and laugh together. You allowed me to be vulnerable during the lowest moments of my doctoral journey. Sioux, how can I say thank you? I guess I will just wait here untill I find the words.

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Xoli, you patiently waited for me come to this point. I never doubted that I am your dearest friend. Here is to you.

Happy and **Buli**, it is my turn to support you.

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To my family

Sis Gugu, I am not done with academic work but my PhD is done. Do not worry. The stress is gone. I love you, buckets.

Tilly, my dear sister, it is done. Our spur of the moment outings are back.

Bra Joe. What can I say my dear Brother? Your endure so much. Thank you for allowing me to write your story. I look at you with admiration and appreciation. I love you from the bottom of my heart.

Nobody knows the ups and flows of a PhD journey better than your **immediate family**.

Karabo, mtanam[1]. I started this doctoral journey when I was still employed at UJ and you were a student there. We studied until late. You at the library and me in my office. We shared a car and it was a pleasure because I did not need to drive. You were there all the time. No words can express how deeply proud I am of you. You taught me how to be a mother and I cannot thank you enough.

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Lwandle, mtanam, Oh, your colourful character, your healthy attitude and positive outlook in life, your love of old music and dance rubs off me in good way all the time. You knew when the PhD got to me and you rejoiced when I picked myself up and got to work. During those times you said, "This is what I like to see". Those delicous meals you make – packed with flavour!!! Gave me so much joy and relief during this journey.

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Vilakazi. Mphepethe. Binda Khulu waGama. Wena Wase Ngwede ne Ingwavuma. Owadla udade wabo. Wathi akananyone. Akanamhlehlo[3]

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[1] My child

[2] Literally this wise Setswana expression means whoever does something or is given something, or is recognised last, is a king.

[3] Clan names.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother Mapeta Christina Mazibuko.

Mama, you saw me when I was starting this journey. You are with me and looking at me from a good place. Mama, you always said "Imfundo ayi khulelwa. Umtu ufunda ade a guge"[4].

Mama you left a gaping hole in my heart. I miss you deeply. I see you and I sense your presence and I feel you in my heart and in my mind.

I have a deep wish to see you again – just one more time while I am here.

Khoza. Jibane. Msurutshwa. Mkeketwa. Kalamafu. Mapeta.[5]

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[4] Age does not determine the need to learn. Learning is life-long and you can learn until you grow old.

[5] Clan names

Abstract

I am a storyteller. I believe in the power of stories to share experiences and to elucidate thoughts and ideas and to help us to make sense of complex social practices. This thesis includes the stories of five young women who were learning to become teachers. As they shared their stories with me, I share them with you. This study includes their stories of receiving feedback. These stories are structured within the Narrative Inquiry dimensions of temporality, place and context. These dimensions suggest that stories are historical and move through time, stories are shaped by place and the context in which they unfold (Clandinin, 2013). Furthermore, these stories demonstrate how feedback can serve to give access to powerful knowledge and can serve to recognise who our students are and what they bring to the academy (Hordern, 2018). But feedback can also serve to misrecognise.

Much has been written and reported about the barriers preventing students from acting on the feedback on their assignment tasks in higher education. In this study, I argue that feedback is a pedagogic practice that can support students to gain epistemic access. Feedback can only achieve this if it makes the expectations explicit for students to make sense of and make meaning for themselves and if it is offered in a dialogical format which recognises the students, their attempts, their identities, and their knowledge. The research question of this study, 'How do experiences of forms of feedback affect female undergraduate student teachers' chances of epistemic access?', is not unusual. There have been many research projects that have been carried out that examine students' experiences of feedback (for example, Evans, 2013; Basey, Maines, & Francis, 2014; Nicol et al.; 2014; Carless, 2019; Winstone et al., 2021). But I identified a gap where feedback has not, to my knowledge, been studied directly through the lenses of Epistemic Justice towards Parity of Participation. This study interpreted five undergraduate student teachers' feedback experiences through these lenses. Narrative inquiry enabled me to design this study in ways that foregrounded experience. Data was collected through multiple conversations during which I organised the participants' life stories of feedback within the dimensions of temporality, place and context, and sociality.

Miranda Fricker's (2007) theory of Epistemic Justice and Fraser's norm of Parity of Participation (2000) framed this study. I engaged with Fricker and Fraser's literature meaningfully as a reader and researcher. I established an understanding of how the lenses offered by Fraser and Fricker allowed me to make sense of the literature more generally, in social life and on the pedagogic practice of feedback. Fricker's theory of Epistemic Justice considers the epistemically unjust, gendered, raced and classed, experiences of epistemic agents. Fricker (2007) draws on two central concepts to account for epistemic injustices: Testimonial Injustice and Hermeneutical Injustice. Fricker (2007; 2003) explains that testimonial injustice occurs within a testimonial exchange setting, when an epistemic agent as a

speaker gives testimony of the epistemic agent's experiences and knowledge but is not awarded the credibility the speaker deserves (Fricker, 2003). Epistemic agents who participate in a testimonial exchange need to overcome bias and prejudice in order to evaluate testimonies with the degree of fairness the testimony deserves (Fricker, 2013; 2016). Hermeneutical injustice occurs when an epistemic agent is unable to make sense and make meaning of their social experiences. Hermeneutical injustice strengthens when the epistemic agent is prevented from gaining access to resources that might help with sense making and meaning making of these social experiences (Dielman, 2012; Fricker, 2016). To ensure that meaning can be made between people and groups of people, there needs to be some shared understandings of the purpose and process of sense making and meaning-making – or a willingness to co-create such shared understandings.

Fraser's norm of Participatory Parity enabled a consideration of the larger world of political and economic systems that give rise to social injustice. In this study, the theories of Fricker and Fraser are used to illuminate experiences of feedback of the five undergraduate student teachers who are the participants in this study and how these translate to epistemic and social injustice. The norm of Participatory Parity is considered where feedback allowed or restricted participants from participating on an equal footing in the feedback process.

Narrative inquiry, a research methodology that is used to study experiences, was used to inform research strategies of this study. Participants' experiences, data collection and organising the narratives demonstrated the dimensions of temporality and space. The thesis includes biographical vignettes for each of the participants in the study, interspersed with data from across all five participants.

The key findings of this study show that feedback generally operates at the surface levels of grammar correction. In light of the theoretical lenses of this study, I argue that the feedback experiences they shared generally did not recognise their attempts and the identities and knowledges they brought to the tasks. Because the focus was on superficial correction of the specific task, the feedback failed to create conditions for the (re)distribution of knowledge. At times the feedback exerted power on participants. Because the feedback was generally in the form of one directional correction (with little space for interaction with the feedback or dialogue with the assessor), this caused status subordination of participants in the epistemic spaces of teaching practice. Lastly, the lack of clarity of feedback was harmful to the potential for dialogical feedback. Such feedback caused participants to experience forms of epistemic injustice in the form of hermeneutical injustice where it failed to create conditions for the distribution of knowledge. Feedback also caused participants to experience testimonial injustice where it failed to create conditions for recognising participants' processes of

sense-making and meaning-making in the various assignment tasks. Participatory Parity could not occur because the processes of recognition and redistribution were constrained. Feedback then created fertile conditions of epistemic injustice to occur, and participants were likely to have failed to gain the much needed epistemic access.

This study is not the story of bad, uncaring academics; the study acknowledges the context of large classes and heavy workloads in which feedback is or is not given. Rather, this is the story of five women trying to make their way through the university and out into the world as teachers. The study calls for better theorising of feedback and more support for both academics and students to develop feedback literacy so that feedback might serve as a dialogical pedagogic practice that enables epistemic justice.

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Chapter 1 – Navigating higher education

Prologue

When I was a little girl, I occasionally accompanied my mother on trips to the city of Johannesburg. We used to go to downtown Johannesburg to buy clothes cheaply. I thought that was the whole of Johannesburg. Nearby places like Melville, Parktown, and surrounding suburbs were beyond the geographical framing of the city in my mind.

Many years later when I was teaching in a 'township school' after studying at a teacher's training college designated for black people like myself, I signed up for a course through Damelin and I discovered that Johannesburg was a sprawling city with so many worlds that were unfamiliar to me. The bus to my classes took me past the university then known as Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) and now, after a merger, known as University of Johannesburg (UJ). I looked out of the bus window at the university campus and it felt to me like I was looking at a foreign land.

At that time my friend, Ntebi Seroke, got registered for an office management course at the College Campus which was about 12 kilometres from RAU. The programmes and qualifications that were offered at the College Campus were developed and accredited at RAU. All the lecturers who taught at the College Campus were white and were permanent employees at RAU. Only a small number of Black students who demonstrated high performance, were qualified to register for the programmes that were offered at the College Campus. Ntebi was going to be venturing into the foreign land, even if on a separate campus. Both Ntebi and I thought she had been done a huge favour by being allowed to study there.

Years later, when I registered at RAU (by then it was UJ), to do an upgrade of my teacher's diploma qualification, I was no longer looking at the campus through a bus window. I drove into the campus in my own car and it felt like a place of wonder. I had a sense that I had 'arrived'. Even then, I had to navigate many fears and feelings of insecurity that as a young township woman I did not belong in these impressive buildings.

I remember being shocked to meet a professor, who would be one of my teachers, and discover he was covered in tattoos and rode a motorbike. That was not the image of a professor that I had in my mind. In our first class, he said he admired many of us in that class because some of us were wives and mothers, and we left our families to come and pursue a university education. I felt proud that my identity had been acknowledged, but he then went on to say, "Not all of you will be here by the end of this course". I was reminded again that I was lucky to be allowed to be there and that I might not really belong. Despite such misgivings and ongoing imposter syndrome, I stuck it out and remained long enough to work as a tutor for the same professor and later as a full-time employee in the academic support centre at UJ and later at the University of Pretoria in the same capacity. Jump forward to November 2021, and I am about to submit my PhD thesis for assessment in a few weeks.

The context of higher education in South Africa has changed completely from when I looked out of the bus window at the foreign land of the university. But at the same time, it has hardly changed at all. My experiences in those years at UJ, as a part-time student with a teaching qualification and then as a full-time employee, were highly formative. My PhD study emerged through those experiences.

My commitment to education and the understanding that we teachers bring our whole being to the classroom has been an impetus for this study and has sustained me on the long journey. I have always been interested in feedback. I remember when I attended my first Doc week[6] at Rhodes University, where I am reading towards my PhD, and hearing about 'poor throughput rates'. I knew that I needed to do a study that would focus on students' experiences and contribute to social justice in higher education. I asked myself, 'How do feedback experiences enable students to gain epistemic access and succeed in their studies?' I wanted to do a social justice study that would contribute to our understanding of feedback in higher education and that might influence the student teachers that would be participants in the study and the many students like them. The participants in this study are five young women studying to become teachers. Their journey to higher education was different to mine. They are so-called 'born-frees' just like my own children are, born after democracy came to our

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[6] 'Doc Weeks' happen three times a year and, prior to COVID, involved us coming together on campus at Rhodes University with top researchers from around the world to engage in seminars and workshops.

country in 1994. Their world is so different to the world I viewed from the bus window, but every now and again, the worlds of the past and present come together and I can see how much more change is needed (Badat, 2010).

Introduction

This study looks at feedback on student assignment tasks. Academics often spend hours providing feedback on student assignments only to find that students do not act on the feedback academics give. On the other hand, students often have negative experiences of feedback and talk about feedback as something that is confusing or even hurtful. It is in this context that I sought to make sense of how five young female students, who were participants in this study understood and experience feedback. The five young female students, at the time of this study, were studying to become teachers at the Faculty of Education at one university in South Africa. They told me that they wanted to become teachers from a young age. The five student teachers needed to gain epistemic access into academic literacies of teaching practice. Epistemic access, according to Morrow is "learning how to become a successful participant in an academic practice" (Morrow, 2009:78).

This PhD uses a narrative approach which foregrounds the stories of the five participants. These stories entail the participants' past experiences of feedback while the participants were in high school. These past experiences of feedback were shaped by life circumstances and contexts the participants found themselves in. Furthermore, these past experiences shaped how participants made sense of feedback they received on their assignment tasks at university as they were taking on literacies of teaching practice. I collected the data over two years and came to know these five students quite well. I hope that I have done justice to their stories in this thesis and that in doing so I have contributed to our understanding of the feedback practice in higher education.

This study takes Nancy Fraser's (2000) norm of Participatory Parity and Miranda Fricker's (2007) theory of Epistemic Injustice approach to the feedback practice. Participation, recognition, and distribution or sharing of knowledge are central to the two theoretical approaches, and feedback is seen in this study as demonstrating characteristics of these theoretical approaches. Education in general is seen as a vehicle for improving the ways in which we live and work generally, and feedback has the potential to contribute to how we live and work. The same principle applies to students as they take on disciplinary literacies towards their qualifications. For higher education to be socially just, pedagogic practices like feedback need to nurture students in a way that values and respects them during their studies. This is not a simple task, and it is one which takes place in a complex historical context, which is what I will now briefly introduce.

The context of the study: Redressing HE

When South Africa was ruled by the apartheid government, the higher education sector was fragmented, and it was designed to benefit white South Africans at the expense of Black South Africans. At this time, there were universities for white people that used Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. These erstwhile universities were University of the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom University, the University of Pretoria, the University of Port Elizabeth (dual medium), Rand Afrikaans University and the University of Stellenbosch. These universities actively promoted apartheid government ideologies. The aim of these universities explicitly included preserving the Afrikaans culture, promoting apartheid ideology, and ensuring that the resources of the state benefited white people only (Reilly, 2016). Then there were institutions for white students which used English as the medium of instruction: University of Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, and University of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. While the English medium institutions positioned themselves as more liberal and as being opposed to the apartheid ideology, they did little to actively reject the status quo. For example, in 1960 the University of Witwatersrand complied with the University Act of 1959 and reduced the number of Black students who were registered at the university. Black students could only study at white universities by government permission and even then, only if the programme the Black student wished to pursue was not offered at universities designated for the Black population. The Black students who were permitted to study at any of the white universities were mainly at postgraduate level and often studied off campus (Pogrund, 1990; Mangcu, 2012; Reilly, 2016). This history is a clear example of social injustice in higher education where an unfair distribution of resources was structured into the system and Black people were marginalised and misrecognised because of the colour of their skin.

Alongside these well-resourced universities for the white population were universities designated for the Black population. These were predominantly under-resourced and endured significant state interference in both employment and financial decisions. The programmes offered in such universities were typically focused on the needs of the administratively intensive apartheid government and very little research or postgraduate study was permitted. These universities included University of Fort Hare, University of Durban-Westville, University of the Western Cape, and Turfloop (Council of Higher Education, 2013; CHE, 2016).

Alongside this division of universities for white students and universities for Black students (each divided into ethnic groups: 'Indian', 'Coloured', Xhosa, Zulu[7]), was the so-called binary divide between

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[7] The term 'Indian' is used to designate South Africans of Indian descent and the term 'Coloured' is used to designate people of mixed race. Both problematic terms were used under apartheid and are still used by the

universities and technikons. Technikons were set up to offer vocational training and offered state sanctioned 'national diplomas' with no research or postgraduate studies until the last days of apartheid. They too were divided to cater for different demographic groups and endured significant state interference (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

It was from this fragmented past that the post-apartheid higher education sector had to develop a coherent and fair higher education sector. A system of mergers and incorporations was used to reduce replications across institutions and to redress the past, though the extent to which this was successful is contested. Alongside the mergers was the formation of three institutional types rather than the previous binary divide. The new institutional types are: traditional universities (focused on formative and professional degrees), universities of technology (focused on diplomas) and comprehensive universities that combine the two (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; Boughey & McKenna 2021).

One of the three functions of universities outlined by the Council on Higher Education (2013:27) is to "provide opportunities for social mobility and strengthen social justice and democracy, thus helping to overcome the inequities inherited from our apartheid past". The broader call for social justice means that people need to *consistently* experience fair distribution and fair access to resources, people need to recognise each other as human beings with dignity and respect, and people need to participate as equals in social arrangements and activities. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa emphasises equality, the right to inherent dignity, as well as access to resources and justice. These provisions in our supreme legal document need to be realised with consistency. For higher education to meet these demands, the system needed to change significantly so that all students could experience a fair education. Social justice in South Africa began to function when it became possible for Black South Africans to study at any higher education institution of their choice. Since then, the image of higher education changed dramatically in many ways. Higher education institutions saw student numbers growing enormously and student bodies became much more diverse. The student body was changing across South Africa (Mohamedbhai, 2008; Council of Higher Education , 2016; Case, Marshall, Mckenna, & Mogashana, 2018; Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Despite these successes, the effects of apartheid continue to plague the system. Black students continue to perform worse than their white counterparts in every university and programme (Council of Higher Education, 2016, 2021). At the same time, funding for higher education failed to keep up

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Department of Labour to measure demographic shifts. Much of the literature focuses on universities being designated along racial lines but the apartheid government also used ethnic divisions to increase their power.

with inflation and fees escalated every year making higher education out of reach for many students. It was within this context that students protested across the country[8] in 2015 and 2016.

#FeesMustFall #RhodesMustFall

Apart from the educational challenges that Black students experience disproportionately, many of them have financial burdens that make it difficult for them to study seamlessly. Many of them drop out because of financial exclusion (Ntshingila, 2016; Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007). The protests also highlighted the ways in which the culture of the university played a role in their academic failures as they had to cope with new expectations and practices that were rarely made explicit, and which disregarded the knowledges they brought with them, and which were often infused with unspoken notions of white superiority. As much as Black students increasingly gained access into institutions of higher learning, "their delight at getting through the gate changed to despair and anger as they realised that their outsider status and inability to change things, or even to act, remained unaltered" (Godsell & Chikane, 2016: 60). An institutional culture that excludes students contributes to poor performance by fostering a sense of alienation and denying some students the opportunity of fulfilling their wishes of getting a university qualification (Scott et al., 2007). Redressing the structure of the higher education system was meant to ensure that all students are included in the practices and cultures of the university to enable them fair opportunities to learn (Dawson et al., 2018) but the successes in this regard were limited. Students could not contain this plight beyond 2015 when it was announced that tuition fees would be increased yet again, in some cases by 10.5%. Student protests erupted across the country.

The student movement #RhodesMustFall started at the University of Cape Town when Maxwele threw faeces at the statue of arch imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes. This protest grew rapidly as students protested the ongoing colonial nature of higher education. An iteration of the protest, #FeesMustFall, arguably started at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and spread across South African higher education institutions between October 2015 into 2016. Students took their protests to the seats of power in Parliament in Cape Town, at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, and the head offices of the African National Congress, Luthuli house in Johannesburg. During the #FeesMustFall protests students forced Professor Adam Habib, the then Vice Chancellor and Principal at Wits university to sit down and listen. This also happened at various other universities, including the one where this study takes place, where Vice Chancellor Dr Sizwe Mabizela engaged with students 'at ground level'. This was a symbolic calling to power. The government responded to students' demands to allow for a 0% fee

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[8] Many Historically Black Universities and Universities of Technology had experienced annual protests about fees and lack of resources since 1994 but it was only in 2015 that these protests became national.

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increase the following year but the burden for this was carried at least in part from university's existing budgets. Higher education funding through NSFAS (National Students Financial Aid Scheme) was increased to further support poor students to gain access into higher education. The National Treasury and universities had to find money to alleviate the fee burden of poor students. South Africa is led by the African National Congress, and one argument is that the government had to make these concessions because students make up a sizeable and influential voting constituency in South Africa (Booysen, 2016).
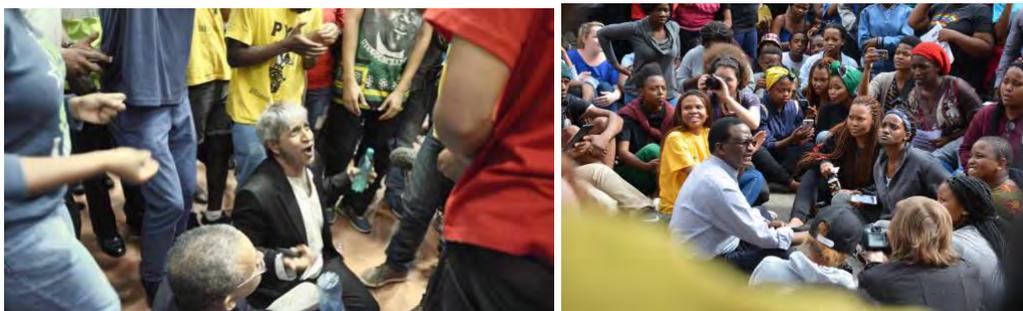
Figure 1**: Vice-Chancellors of Wits and Rhodes University during protests (Photos taken from Associated Press)**

The process to insource university workers' services was also set in motion at a substantial cost to many universities; "by mid-2016 Wits estimated that insourcing would add R100 million to its annual budget" (Booysen, 2016:39). The calls for insourcing of labour indicated that the students' concerns were related to a broad suite of social justice issues. They were angered by the outsourcing of institutional processes such as cleaning, groundskeeping, and catering, to companies that paid the minimum wages and offered little job security. "There was no consideration of whether the outsourcing practices, encompassing service and remuneration are compatible with the values that the university professes to embraces" (Ntshingila, 2016: 88).

Decolonising the curriculum is a current and complex debate in Higher Education in South Africa. The resolution of this debate needs time and research that can contribute to decolonising the curriculum in ways that can inform pedagogical practices to align with African epistemologies (Heleta, 2016; Mbembe, 2016; Motala, Sayed, & de Kock, 2021). In South African higher education institutions, there are ongoing discussions, seminars, conferences, and workshops to unpack what decolonising the curriculum means, and which are appropriate actions to take, and what processes should be followed to decolonise the curriculum in South Africa (Hlatshwayo & Alexander, 2021). Having provided a brief

overview of the study context, an issue to which I return later, I now move to look at the specific issue this study is concerned with: feedback on student assignment tasks.

The problem of this study

In light of the above discussion, it is important to understand how student success and performance has not fared as well as have the changes in physical access. Only 27% of the South African cohort of students who entered higher education for the first time obtained their qualification in 3 to 4 years Graduation rates showed that only 48% of contact students graduated from their three-year programmes within five years of study, and it is unlikely that many more would graduate after that (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007). Performance in higher education remains racially skewed. Black students' graduation rate stood at 20%, Coloureds 24%, Indians 28% and white students graduated at a rate of 50% (CHE, 2004; Scott et al., 2007; CHE, 2016; Boughey & McKenna 2021). In 2016 there were 701 482 African students enrolled at South African public institutions of higher learning. The total number of students from all racial groups is 975 837 (Council of Higher Education, 2016; Case, Marshall, McKenna, & Mogashana, 2018). The five participants of this study, whose narratives are at the heart of this study are part of the 701 482 African students.

The poor performance of students in higher education can at least in part be traced to students' poor socio-economic contexts. Some students in higher education have been living with poverty all their lives. Some students' lives are characterised by unemployed families who are unable to provide healthy and nurturing living conditions for their children. The rapid increase in the means tested NFSAS loans indicates the number of students who come to university from homes where even basic needs are difficult to meet. These students would also have attended schools that do not provide them with a just education. The school system continues to be plagued by its history.

The National Party, which instilled apartheid came to power in 1948, though racist structures were already strongly in place thanks to the colonial years. The apartheid government promoted a harmful ideology that Black and white people needed to develop separately and that white people were superior to Black people. Black people were regarded as "biologically inferior, like hopeless children" (Reilly, 2016:149) Black people were forced to accept that separate development, racial separation, racial discrimination, and social inequalities were normal, and it was the natural order of the lives of Black people. White supremacy was also maintained through education, and an education system for Black People called Bantu Education was designed. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was introduced by Hendrick Verwoerd, who was the Minister of Native Affairs at the time. The Bantu education system was structured to reflect apartheid policies where Black people were exposed to a basic education that prepared them for manual labour. The government decided which jobs where suitable for Black

people. The aim of Bantu education was to naturalise the apartheid ideology and make it seem acceptable to Black people (Booyce, le Roux, Seroto, & Wolhuter, 2011). Bantu education was used to ensure the maintenance of the upper white social classes and maintain an unjust and harmful idea that Black people were inferior to white people and belonged to the second or even the third social class. Bantu education prepared them for lowly positions in the workplace, for servitude, and the exploitation of Black labour (Reilly, 2016).

The curriculum was designed by apartheid architects to ensure that the educational competencies of Black people were limited and controlled. Any teaching that could enlighten Black people to the realities of Bantu education system was supressed. Black teachers were forced to teach learners about the ideology of social inequality and social class, and they were not allowed to question or challenge or critique this ideology. Black teachers, Black students and Black parents had to submit and resign themselves to the limiting demands of Bantu education (Pogrund, 1990). Bantu education "was by far the most repressive education system South Africa has ever experienced" (Ndimande, 2013:22). In light of this historical account, students born of parents who could not overcome the epistemic harm of apartheid, inherited this harm, and it continues to harm them to this day.

Poor schooling backgrounds that many students have experienced are characterised by absent or unqualified teachers or vacant posts and mismanagement and corruption. There are other long-standing factors that contribute to poor schooling such as large numbers and poor teacher: pupil ratios, which make it impossible for teachers to teach all pupils effectively. Some public schools in South Africa have insufficient resources to enable teaching and learning to take place smoothly. These problems are further impacted by poor school management, and teachers who seem to have little specialist knowledge (Bloch, 2009; Jansen, 2011). All these negative factors impact on the learning of pupils in school and these problems are then transferred to learning in higher education where student poor success is evident.

Higher education success is not only about preparedness for study thanks to the benefits of quality schooling. There is ample evidence that university success emerges from a complex mix of factors (Boughey & McKenna, 2021), which importantly, include the extent to which the practices expected of students are made explicit to students and they are given opportunities to practice these. Formal access is thus not enough to claim that higher education is socially just, though it is of course a necessary pre-condition. The word 'access' is important because it portrays the issue of redistributive justice, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, but for now it can be understood as the need to redistribute the goods of society more equitably given the unjust ways in which they were allocated along the lines of race during apartheid. Formal access was, as indicated, highly restricted under

apartheid and so needs to be understood as an issue of redistributive justice and not only as an administrative process that formally admits students who apply and qualify to study at university.

Students who are formally admitted potentially gain access to the resources the university offers. These resources include using the university library, the computer laboratories, internet access, access to lectures, and all other social and pedagogic arrangements that take place at the university (Leibowitz, 2009; Bozalek & Leibowitz, 2012). However, Morrow (2009) argued that formal access to higher education and its resources is not enough to enable university students to learn and obtain the much sought-after university qualifications. Students need access to the knowledge the university offers. The manner in which knowledge is distributed to students by academics and through learning materials and educational activities depends much on the pedagogic practices that are used in higher education. Higher education practices can make knowledge more or less accessible to students. Students need to gain access to the knowledge of the academy, including the disciplinary 'rules' that underpin such knowledge and the ways of being and doing that also underpin such knowledge. Morrow (2009) refers to such knowledge as epistemic access.

Morrow originally wrote about epistemic access in 1997 because he wanted to explain the importance of teaching and learning in meaningful ways that would challenge what Freire (1970) negatively calls the 'banking model' whereby the transmission of syllabus content was seen to be the goal of education. Epistemic access, according to Morrow, is "learning how to become a successful participant in an academic practice" (2009:79). He argued that students cannot be 'given' epistemic access; they cannot achieve without making an effort. Barnett (2007) similarly argues that students have to take responsibility for their own work and intellectual development. However, they will likely not be able to undertake the learning entirely on their own, they need experienced and qualified academics who use suitable pedagogic practices to support students in their efforts to learn. In the context of this study, feedback is understood as one pedagogic practice that can enable students to gain epistemic access into the fields they are pursuing. Students learn through pedagogic practices that indicate care and include a focus on ensuring social justice (Lotz-Sistka, 2009; du Plooy & Zilindile, 2014).

Sadly, pedagogic practices in higher education, contrary to Morrow's advocating, do not always make the norms and practices of the discipline explicit for students (Boughey & McKenna 2021). This study then extends Morrow's notion of enabling epistemic access and takes cognisance of his idea of adopting a systematic approach to learning that cares. Epistemic access and how it has unfolded at universities in South Africa, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

This study analyses the practice of feedback as one kind of significant pedagogic practice that can affect the abilities of students to gain access to the principled knowledge that is offered at university.

The literature reports repeatedly argue that feedback is a pedagogic practice that ideally forms an integral part of student learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Henderson, Ryan, & Phillips, 2019; Carless, 2019).

Academics in higher education can use feedback to support students to gain an understanding of what is needed for success. Feedback can make explicit the knowledge required and the specific literacy practices needed (Winstone, Balloo, & Carless, 2020). Feedback is given to students by using written or verbal comments about the work they submit for assessment. Students then, ideally, use the feedback to enhance their learning by coming to understand what is valued, what is not, and why. However, the literature shows that feedback does not often fulfil such promises, as it should (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Boud & Molloy, 2013). The literature on feedback shows that there are obstacles that prevent students from using feedback meaningfully (Henderson et al., 2019). Feedback often fails to perform the pedagogic task of enabling epistemic access and developing students' discipline-specific literacy practices. Researchers of feedback call for the development of feedback literacies that can operate within specific disciplines at university (Carless , 2012; Nicol, 2013; Carless, 2013). These debates as articulated in the literature, are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

An overview of the thesis: what you can expect

This study is framed by Miranda Fricker's theory of Epistemic Justice (2007) and Nancy Fraser's theory of Participatory Parity (2000), both of which are discussed in detail in the next chapter: Chapter Two. Epistemic justice is a theory that is used to understand forms of injustice that occur particularly in epistemic settings. At the core of both Epistemic Justice and Participatory Parity is participation, recognition and the sharing of knowledge and social experiences. Fricker (2007) says people in general are epistemic agents who operate within epistemic settings as knowers and some of them are likely to have experienced forms of epistemic injustice. Epistemic injustice has two dimensions: hermeneutical injustice and testimonial injustice. When epistemic agents experience the harm of hermeneutical injustice, they are often unable to understand some social experiences for themselves and explain these harmful experiences to others because they are excluded from meaning making. Epistemic agents can experience this form of injustice because of prejudicial laws or social practices that discriminate against race and gender for instance. In Chapter Two, I tell stories to illustrate hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice occurs when an epistemic agent is not heard or what she says is not taken seriously. Testimonial injustice can occur because of prejudices as regards gender, class, race, and other social constructed categories. Again, in Chapter Two I tell stories to illustrate testimonial injustice.

The theory of epistemic justice includes all learning spaces, formal and informal, and can be applied to the pedagogic settings of the university. Fricker (2017) accepts that there is no need to put boundaries to how her theory could be used. Students at university are likely to experience hermeneutical injustice when they are expected to understand the norms of their fields of study, of the reading and writing practices they need to take on, or the culture of the institution, without any scaffolding, transparency, or possibilities for critique (Constandius, Bitzer, & Waghid, 2015; Bearman & Ajjawi, 2018). Students are also likely to experience testimonial injustice when they try their best to present coherent answers which are ignored or dismissed. Since this study focuses on feedback, hermeneutical injustice and testimonial injustice provided powerful lenses that enabled me to identify and explain injustices within the feedback practice. While Fricker's (2007) theory focuses on meaning making, the other theory drawn on is wider in its intent.

As I detail in Chapter Two, Nancy Fraser's (2000; 2001; 2003) normative theory of Participatory Parity also frames this study. At the core of Participatory Parity is the need for participation, recognition, and redistribution of social goods including epistemic goods. The norm of Participatory Parity promotes an understanding that people within social settings, including epistemic settings, need to be able to participate actively and equally. People need to enjoy a fair distribution of social goods, including access to the knowledge of their programme, to sustain their participation. Participatory Parity has two main dimensions. The one dimension is recognition and the other one is (re)distribution. Fraser (2000; 2001; 2003) insists that recognition and redistribution need to be understood under one frame simply because one is the result of the other. The stories I tell in Chapter Two, are hopefully useful to illustrate this norm of Participatory Parity. The Participatory Parity lens enabled me to see how feedback might demonstrate the dimension of (re)distribution of knowledge, and recognition of the meaning that students are trying to make as they take on academic literacy practices at university.

in Chapter Three, I present a literature review about what the prior research tells us about feedback as a pedagogic practice. As I have already outlined, much of the research on feedback suggests that it is a vital space for inducting students into the norms, values, and expectations of the field. It is a space for identifying where students have come to understand a concept or where they are off the mark. However, the literature also suggests that feedback fails to achieve its aims in this regard as it is often misunderstood or ignored or is provided in a form that is confusing or hurtful. In Chapter Three, I discuss the literature on this phenomenon and indicate how this study seeks to address some of the concerns raised in that literature.

This study, as indicated earlier, understands the practice of feedback as an experience, and experiences are temporal. I unpack this in detail in Chapter Four, where I explain that this study is

based on a narrative approach with a broad understanding that when people tell stories about themselves and their experiences of a phenomenon, they are providing insights into the effects that such events have had on their lives. Narrative inquiry as a research methodology, has enabled me to study students' experiences of feedback in ways that can support transformation in situations where forms of social and epistemic Injustice are likely to emerge. Since this study focuses on epistemic justice and the need for Participatory Parity, it was important for me to use a method that ensured that the participants are fully visible in the thesis and that their stories are respected. The pseudonyms chosen by the five participants were Bourney, Kgase, Bumblebee, Lande, and Marsha.

Chapter Four discusses Narrative Inquiry in more detail, but in brief, data was collected from the five participants throughout 2017 and 2018 following Bourney and Kgase from first-year to second-year and following Bumblebee, Lande, and Marsha in their second-year of study and into their third. A narrative inquiry allows a researcher to use sampling strategies that are common in any qualitative study. I relied on the network at Rhodes University that was made available to me – people that I had never met before. As I explain in Chapter Four, my sampling strategy started off as an opportunistic sampling strategy and included aspects of a stratified sampling and purposive strategy. All these supported my decision on the criteria and the number of participants that would enable me to support my research design (Durrheim & Painter, 2006; Durrheim, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I collected the data through narrative conversations. Narrative conversations enabled conversations that were mutually respectful and authentic. The conversations have allowed me, as a researcher, to care for the participants in ways that do not objectify them and treat them as 'subjects' whose role is to yield data (Squires, 2013). I transcribed the data myself and used Atlas.ti to manage the coding and to code and group the codes into categories and develop themes. Unfortunately, my version of Atlas.ti crashed, and I could not retrieve all the data that I organised. This sent me back to the start of data analysis but was but one bump along the way in what turned out for various reasons, professional and personal, to be a fairly rough road. In engaging with such setbacks, I had to keep my eye on my commitment to my five participants and the intentions behind the study.

Chapter Four also provides a discussion of the ethical issues. All studies bring ethical issues that need to be considered in depth. 'Ethics' is increasingly understood as the process of obtaining clearance from a university committee to engage in a research project, rather than a careful deliberation of how a research project might do good, be designed in ways that make harm unlikely and which ensure that everyone involved is treated with respect. It was of primary concern for me that my participants had a sense that being part of the study was of benefit to them, despite the time they needed to make available to me and the willingness they needed to share their own stories. I strongly believe this to

have been the case. As a woman much older than them and as an academic, I think they saw me as someone who took a parental consideration towards them and as someone genuinely interested in their wellbeing and in sharing their educational journey. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Four. Of course, I also needed to ensure that I had complied with all relevant ethical clearance obligations.

My proposal was accepted on 7 December 2015 by the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee. The letter of approval stated that "In the event that the proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes, the approval of the proposal by the committee constitutes ethical clearance". This was the case with this proposal and the committee thus approved ethical clearance. The Ethical Clearance number was 2015.10.3. (See Appendix A). Subsequent to this, the process has changed considerably and ethical clearance is now provided by the Ethics Committee at the university, a process which has increased the timeframes considerably. I had initially planned to collect data at another university but was blocked as there was a view that I should be registered at that university to research it. For pragmatic reasons then, I changed the study site to Rhodes University, which is where this study is registered, even though I was an academic at the University of Johannesburg at the time and shortly thereafter moved to UNISA.

My next step was to write a letter to the registrar for permission to collect data from students at the Faculty of Education at Rhodes University (see Appendix B). Following this, I wrote an invitation letter to students and invited them to be participants in my study. The invitation letter explained what my research study was about and how they were going to participate in the study (see Appendix C). The consent form was attached to the invitation letter (see Appendix D). The data collection process started after the participants returned the signed consent form and I began with the process of data collection. Finally, the participants were given an option to choose their pseudonyms to protect their identity and anonymity. The issues of ethics and my positionality are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven offer the main findings of the study. I provide a vignette biography of each of the five participants within these chapters at points that seemed most pertinent to the findings being discussed. I then draw across these chapters on the data from all five participants to provide examples and evidence of the findings I share. Chapter Five starts with Bumblebee's story before going on to discuss all five participants' experiences of receiving feedback that was concerned with surface level correction rather than enabling students to develop their meaning making. The chapter also contains Marsha's story before considering the ways in which feedback can exert power over students. Chapter Six starts with Kgase's story before discussing feedback that takes the form of symbols and marks which were often impenetrable to the participants. Chapter Seven starts with

Bourney's story and later includes Lande's story too. It focuses on the affective nature of feedback. The Findings chapters thus move from individual vignettes to discussions across the data and back again. In this way, I attempt to build knowledge claims that are not abstracted from the voices of the student participants themselves.

Chapter Eight, the conclusion, draws together the key findings and offers a look at what I believe to be the doctoral contribution of the study. In this chapter I also look at what the possibilities are for change that are suggested by the study findings. In this way, I hope that the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of feedback as a pedagogic practice and the need for all educators to consider the importance of parity of participation in our classrooms so that we might enable epistemic justice.

Chapter Two - A conversation between Fricker and Fraser

I said man is always talking 'bout it's inhumanity to man
But what is he tryin' to do to make it a better man?
Oh, just read the paper, turn on your TV
You see folks demonstrating about equality

'Tryin' Times'
By Donna Hathaway & Leroy Hutson
From Roberta Flack's debut album First Take (1969)

Introduction

I try in this chapter to bring Miranda Fricker (2007) and Nancy Fraser (2003) into conversation with each other. I try as far as I can to read Fraser through Fricker and read Fricker through Fraser in ways that challenge the idea that I, as a reader and researcher and most of all as a human, can ever meaningfully engage with literature objectively and independently.

In this affirmative way of reading texts through each other, I am aware of the dangers of assuming commonalities and differences between their concepts where those theorists may themselves not see them – and yet I do so with the understanding that these ideas exist in the world beyond the theorists who developed them. Miranda Fricker recognises that her seminal theory of Epistemic Justice evolved over time, and that many have used the concept of epistemic injustice and its related concepts in various ways. Fricker is of the opinion that "there is no point in trying to put boundaries in advance" (Fricker, 2017:53). Similarly, Fraser (2013) has argued that her works will be taken up in various ways according to the context of the reader, though she also expresses concerns about how whole movements, such as feminism, can be misappropriated in ways that serve a particular dominant order, such as neoliberalism. Fraser calls us to understand that the world is relational and entangled (Dahl, Stoltz, & Willig, 2004). Making sense of this as an academic researcher means that I have to not only learn the academic practices needed for me to complete this PhD but also critique them as a person complicit in the system.

In bringing Fricker's and Fraser's deliberations together in this chapter, I am aware that they may not have taken each other's work much into account (I don't know if Miranda and Nancy even know each other) and I am absolutely certain that when they were writing their understandings in the works referenced in this chapter, they did not consider that I, Bella Vilakazi, would be drawing on these ideas to discuss the very specific issue of undergraduate student teachers' experiences of feedback in the very specific context of a university in South Africa. The notion of the key theorists being 'in

conversation' with each other in this way also echoes my concern with the life stories of my participants and myself which are offered throughout this thesis.

Epistemic (in)justice: Painting the picture of an epistemic setting

While Fricker and Fraser are both concerned with multiple forms of justice and how injustices occur, for the purposes of this study I look specifically at how their work helps us to understand injustices related to knowing and fair and just participation in epistemic settings. Fricker (2007) explains that in any epistemic setting there is a constant flow and sharing of knowledge and experiences among epistemic subjects. People as epistemic subjects are knowers, and they participate and interact with each other in their capacity as knowers (Fricker, 2007). Fricker refers to such conversations as testimonial exchanges where epistemic subjects bring their knowledge and experiences to participate with others in their capacity as knowers. Epistemic injustice is not only to do with formal education; it is applicable to almost all forms of social life and individual lived experiences. Epistemic injustice explains "a distinctive class of wrongs, namely those in which someone is ingenuously downgraded and/or disadvantaged in respect of their status as an epistemic subject" (Fricker, 2017:1). In this study, I am specifically drawing on the theory of epistemic injustice to understand how experiences of feedback might restrict undergraduate participants in my study from gaining epistemic access.

Fricker (2007) argues that epistemic injustices can lead to both practical and epistemic harms. To think about this in terms of feedback practices, it can be considered that if feedback perpetrates an epistemic injustice and fails to enable student success, then there has been the *practical harm* of students failing and suffering all the many emotional, financial, and other consequences of this. Epistemic access can enable participants in this study to learn how to become full participants of teaching practice. Epistemic access then can enable participants to embody the norms of academic literacies, make sense and make meaning of these as they learn at university (Morrow, 1994; Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2007). However, an *epistemic harm* can occur if participants have not been granted access to powerful knowledge and may have had their own prior knowledge and experiences undermined (McKenna, 2010). Similarly, Samuel, Dhumpath, and Amin, (2016) refer to 'cognitive damage' which occurs when the individual is rendered invisible, powerless or enslaved. Feedback, as discussed in Chapters One and Three, is one pedagogic practice that can make academic norms explicit and pave the way for epistemic access, thereby addressing such cognitive damage or epistemic harm.

Epistemic injustices can occur along a number of lines, such as where the knowledge and experiences of epistemic subjects are taken for granted, or when their knowledge and social experience is not recognised, or where people are denied access to knowledge. Fricker (2007) draws on two central

concepts to account for epistemic injustices: hermeneutical injustice and testimonial injustice, which I discuss more later.

For Fraser (2000; 2003), the key to all kinds of justice is the ability of all people in any given situation to participate fully. Parity of Participation is thus a norm that is seen to be the key to justice.

While Fraser outlines a number of concepts for understanding all kinds of injustice within this broader notion of Participatory Parity, the two key issues for this study are (mis)recognition and (mal)distribution, and I will discuss both in this chapter alongside Fricker's concepts of Hermeneutical Injustice and Testimonial Injustice. This is not to equate Fricker's terms and concepts with those of Fraser or vice versa but rather to bring them into conversation in ways in which the one may illuminate the other.

Speakers and hearers in an epistemic setting

In an epistemic space, and in the various social practices that construct such a space, Fricker (2003) suggests that there are roles that epistemic agents play where one agent takes on a role of a speaker and the other takes on a role of a hearer. Epistemic agents may exchange these roles depending on the circumstances in which they find themselves (Fricker, 1998). Speakers are epistemic agents who in most cases seek full membership in a particular epistemic practice and need validation from hearers. Speakers then come to particular epistemic spaces and they bring with them knowledge and experiences and practices they learned from their complex socio-cultural backgrounds (Wilmot & McKenna, 2018). The five participants in this study, for instance, qualify as speakers, because they undertake their studies as students wishing to succeed and as young people seeking to take on the identity of 'teacher'.

Fricker (1998) explains that a hearer in the epistemic space is regarded as the knowledgeable other and the role of the hearer is to listen and adjudicate the testimony of the speaker. Hearers can also take on roles as good informants and the criteria for being identified as good informants includes, but is not limited to, competence and trustworthiness, and more importantly, the good informant needs to be accessible, and open to communication, and willing to share her knowledge. In addition to all these criteria, the good informant also needs to have a good and honest track record (Fricker, 2016). A good informant who satisfies all these criteria can be regarded as having rational authority and credibility. A good informant then has strong social and identity power because a good informant has power to influence the practices within the epistemic setting (Fricker, 2003; Marshall, 2003).

To ensure social justice within an epistemic space, hearers need to recognise the speaker and the speaker's testimony as important, as needed, and as necessary (Fraser 2003; Honneth, 2003). Using the same social justice lens, as the hearer makes these assessments, it is crucial that the hearer is open to receive the testimony without bias or prejudice or become sensitive to the knowledge and experiences of the speaker. It is also important that the hearer also recognises that the speaker is also a knower in their own right, despite possible limitations in the speaker's understanding of this particular epistemic space (Brown, 2016).

In the context of a university, McKenna (2010:8) argued that, in general, when students come to university, they bring with them a range of knowledge/s and associated literacy practices. Although these literacies might or might not be deemed 'acceptable' in the academy, these are the building blocks that can contribute to the success of students. In some cases, these building blocks are similar to the literacy practices of the disciplines students wish to pursue but in others the practices being expected may seem foreign and strange. Medina (2017) emphasises that hearers could also consider that speakers are trying to present their testimonies as intelligibly as they can because "intelligibility is a matter of more or less: doing better or worse in understanding oneself and others is a matter of trying as hard as one can, of paying attention to the emerging expressive and interpretive possibilities, no matter how inchoate or embryonic" (Medina, 2017:43).

A responsible hearer then needs to be open to the possibility of gaining knowledge, gaining a different perspective and a different worldview from the testimony of the speaker. The hearer might also have to examine the hearer's assumptions because the testimony of the speaker may be compelling enough to trigger reflection on the part of the hearer. Speakers then, can play a distributive role of knowledge (Barnett, 2007; Waghid, 2009; Waghid, 2010). In a similar way, Freire (1970:53) indicates that:

> The teacher-of-the-student and the student-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges; teacher student with student teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught …They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.

Fricker (1998) further explains that there are virtues that a hearer needs to have in order to make a proper assessment of the testimony of the speaker in the various epistemic settings. Fricker refers to this virtue as a rational capacity. Rational capacity is a virtue that is given to an individual who plays the role of a hearer with compassion and care. Rational capacity is earned through dedication, passion, experience and sometimes through formal education or a qualification in a particular position of hierarchical power or in specific literacy practices. The hearers who possess rational authority are

expected to engage the speaker in sensible argumentation (Waghid, 2010) in order to enable the speaker to access the knowledge that they seek. Lastly, rational capacity takes ethical and moral issues into account. In higher education, for instance, lecturers take on the role of hearers because they are experts in their fields. Speakers, who are students, present their case to hearers through their participation in class, through their engagement with course materials and, significantly, through their submission of assessments. Speakers come to the epistemic space with knowledge and experience, and they share this knowledge with hearers when the epistemic space is opened up to them. Although the speaker might be positioned less powerfully relative to the hearer due to social status, or institutional structures, as in the case of this study, the hearer can learn something from the speaker if they are inclined to do so (Fraser, 2003; Fricker, 2003).

Epistemic subjects engage in relations of power. The kinds of powers that operate in an epistemic practice can be categorised as social power, agential power, and identity power (Fricker, 2007). Social power is a power that all epistemic subjects have. Agential and identity power shifts and are influenced by the position of an epistemic subject in various epistemic settings in which the epistemic subject operates (Fricker, 2007; Tshuma, 2021). When epistemic subjects gain epistemic access and increase their experiences, epistemic subjects can strengthen their agency and identity especially when they participate in epistemic settings and in testimonial exchanges. Epistemic subjects then "benefit not only from our [their] own eyes and ears, but also from the eyes and ears of fellow inquirers [or speakers]" (Fricker,1998: 162; Fricker, 2007).

In Fraser's (2003) terms, every adult person has a social status which allows them to participate with others meaningfully as peers in social life. Adult social members bring their knowledge and temporal experiences to the epistemic setting. While social members who serve in epistemic settings may come with unequal knowledge and experience relative to others they can bring rich insights and perspective into these settings. In this respect, social members can engage meaningfully in asymmetrical relationships one way or the other (Fricker, 2007). Even though epistemic subjects operate in asymmetrical relationships, there is an ethical responsibility that emerges where socio-epistemic subjects pull together and recognise the participation of each and every socio-epistemic subject. This requires that speakers and listeners do not pre-emptively judge someone, allowing themselves to be caught up with the politics of social categories to decide whose testimony is credible and whose is not. It requires that speakers and listeners recognise and value each other. To consider this more, I now look at Fricker's concept of testimonial justice and Fraser's concept of recognition as being key to epistemic justice and parity of participation.

Testimonial (in)justice and (mis)recognition

Fraser (2000; 2001; 2003) discusses the concept of recognition from within a model of social status. Fraser clarifies upfront that the position she takes on recognition as a status model is not concerned with social or cultural groups. Instead, recognition is concerned with an individual social member who functions within a particular social or cultural group. Social status allows each member of a particular group to participate on a par with others in socio-cultural arrangements and practices.

Fraser (2003) emphasises that recognition is morally binding and non-sectarian. This means, recognition does not apply to a social movement, political, religious, or cultural affiliation, instead it applies to the human condition. Recognition applies to the freedoms and the rights of all members who function within a socio-cultural group. In order for the practices of a socio-cultural group to function without bias or prejudice, Fraser explains, the members within that group have to decide for themselves collectively what is most significant for them and adopt practices that enable them to achieve such significance. Therefore, these socio-cultural practices can function well if the freedom and dignity of all members is recognised and respected and if their interests are enhanced fairly. Social members can also agree on principles that govern the group, and practices that can enhance the interests, knowledge, and experiences of all members collectively. Fraser (2003) argues that these principles need to be governed by the value of pluralism, where diverse values are welcomed, valued, and promoted. It is thus through recognition that people are valued and welcomed in a social setting. One of the ways a social member can participate in social arrangements is to bring the knowledge and experiences she has learned from her complex life and multiple and cross-cultural discourses to the social arrangements.

Fricker (2007) emphasises that the social members, or 'epistemic subjects', are knowers and they can participate and contribute meaningfully in their capacity as knowers in particular socio-cultural epistemic arrangements. This requires testimonial justice, whereby the speaker and the hearer accord each other's testimony credibility. In this understanding, the hearer and the speaker recognise each other. Fricker's (2018) understanding of recognition draws on Honneth who argued during an interview with Marcelo (2013:210) that:

> human beings depend on social forms of recognition in order to develop an identity and to gain a certain understanding and a sufficient form of self-relation…We cannot think of human beings as not being dependent on some form of recognition. If they let go of all forms of social recognition, in whatever form it can come about, they have some difficulty in their own self-development

In the same breath, testimonial justice requires hearers to give speakers the credibility and recognition that is due to their testimony. Since speakers and hearers in other circumstances can interchange their roles, there is a reciprocal recognition that needs to take place. Therefore, testimonial justice and recognition have echoes of each other as both demand a respectful openness to the life experience, knowledge, and stories of the other. Fricker (2007; 2003) then argues that epistemic agents who participate in a testimonial exchange, need to try to overcome bias and prejudice to evaluate testimonies with the degree of fairness the testimony deserves. Sherman (2016) emphasises that hearers and speakers, as epistemic agents, can achieve testimonial justice if they understand, and have the knowledge that informs them, how they might cause testimonial injustice. Secondly, strategies that can be used to avoid causing testimonial injustice to occur need to be developed because, as Sherman (2016) argues:

> If we lack good information and strategies, we probably have little or no hope of becoming virtuous. As a practical matter, thinking about epistemic justice as a virtue seems to be no help at all in avoiding epistemic injustice.

In a situation of testimonial justice where all present are accorded recognition, the contribution of each member is valued and is needed to enhance the interests and the practices within the socio-cultural setting. The contribution of people is important because it enriches perspective, and processes of sense-making and meaning-making. Contributions broaden shared understanding and broaden the interpretation of social experiences. If collaborative and democratic strategies are followed and social justice measures are in place in the various socio-cultural and epistemic settings, reciprocal recognition and testimonial justice are likely to emerge.

Fraser (2000) explains that if a social member is excluded or prevented from participating in social arrangements, this member is likely to experience misrecognition and status subordination. Misrecognition and status subordination represents domination, devaluing, disrespect, and exclusion, where a social member is not recognised as a peer. Misrecognition is often experienced by the non-dominant group where the members of this group have distinct characteristics that do not fit the model of understanding of the dominant group. Consequently, misrecognised people can be excluded, prevented from gaining access to social resources, and subsequently marginalised. They suffer testimonial injustices as any contributions they may seek to offer are set aside as unworthy or less than credible. Furthermore, people who are misrecognised and marginalised in this way cannot participate meaningfully in social interactions because they do not have the social resources that can sustain their participation.

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Fraser (2003) suggests remedies to correct unjust practices that cause misrecognition to occur and argues that the social status of members who are misrecognised can be remedied and restored if social members reject practices that prevent people from taking part as full members in social arrangements. This requires not only personal reflexivity, but also that institutionalised patterns of cultural value or institutionalised cultural practices need to be examined, to determine if they are structured in ways that undermine the social standing, and misrecognise the social status of these social members. If these institutionalised cultural practices exclude others and render them as lesser members, then such practices need to be dismantled and replaced with those that enable people to participate in social arrangements (Fraser, 2003; Bozalek & Leibowitz, 2012; Holscher & Bozalek, 2020). All this, including Sherman's (2016) earlier argument, might help socio-epistemic subjects, social institutions and others in epistemic settings to rethink how their institutionalised practices construct the status of socio-epistemic subjects, and how these practices perpetuate forms of epistemic injustice.

Testimonial justice occurs in communicative and interpretive settings where epistemic subjects participate with each other with the intention of understanding. Testimonial injustice occurs when "the level of credibility attributed to the speaker's word is reduced by prejudice operative in the hearer's judgement" (Fricker, 2016:2; 2017). Prejudice on the part of the hearer can be influenced by race, gender, class, a range of different markers of privilege, cultural dominance, and colonial and patriarchal systems. Testimonial injustice takes place during an exchange where epistemic subjects could ideally share knowledge and experiences but are prevented from doing so because certain testimonies are deemed incompetent, irrelevant, or lacking credibility. Assumptions of incompetence can lead to silencing and side-lining.

Testimonial injustices in South Africa

In 1976, I was in Standard five[9] at St Peter's Catholic School. I spent the first five months of that year learning some of my school subjects in Afrikaans because of changes in national policy. I could see how my teachers were battling to teach me in Afrikaans, a language which some of them barely understood. I was battling too. It was a struggle to go to school every day. My classroom was no longer a happy place. I felt like I was dying inside. It was a massive struggle to learn in what was a foreign language to me but also because Afrikaans was understood to be 'the language of the oppressor'.

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[9] Standard 5 is now known as Grade 7. It is the seventh year of formal schooling.

The subjects that would be taught in Afrikaans were Mathematics, Geography, and History. At that time, Afrikaans, was a lingua franca for communities in Soweto and other townships in South Africa but "there was little widespread knowledge of it in the formal, structured sense. For most teachers, it was at best, a third language" (Ndaba & Smith, 2017:162).

It is important at this stage to pause briefly and go back to history. The 'Afrikaans' lingua franca was a mixture of Afrikaans and the native language that was spoken in townships in South Africa. This Afrikaans lingua franca was popularly known as Tsotsitaal or iscamtho. Tsotsitaal or iscamtho is a language that is made up of elements of Afrikaans and other languages that were spoken particularly in Sophiatown, Western Native Township, and Newclare as shown in the map below. Tsotsitaal was a street language and it was spoken by young men and their peers. Although women and girls rarely spoke Tsotsitaal, they understood the language.
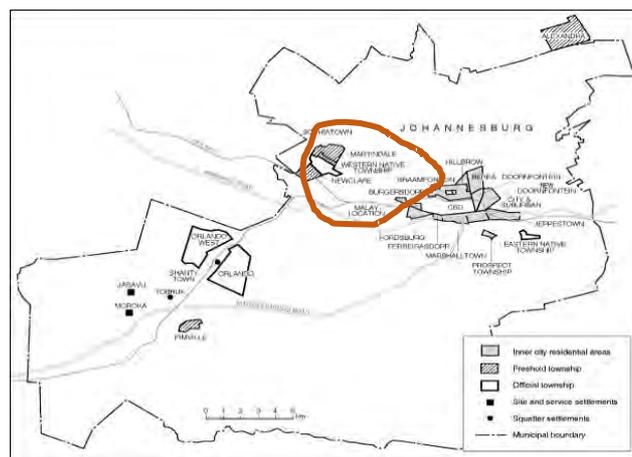
Figure 2: Map of townships in greater Johannesburg region circa 1980

Molamu (1995) took on a study to trace the development of Tsotsitaal and focused on Sophiatown, which was known as 'Kofifi', Western Native Township, known as 'Die Kas', and Newclare, known as 'Maglera' at the time and as the map shows. Molamu reminds us that:

> Western Native Township was established after World War I to provide housing for Africans who were employed in Johannesburg. It covered an area of approximately 75.5 hectares and was situated over eight kilometres to the west of the city centre. Sophiatown and Newclare were located on both sides of Western Native Township (Molamu, 1995:139).

Although Tsotsitaal has diminished considerably since South Africa become a democracy, Tsotsitaal was a means of communication among ethnic and multiracial groups of people who took residence in areas such Sophiatown, Western Native Township, and Newclare. The Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 instigated forced removals of Black people who lived in Sophiatown, as well as in Cape Town, District Six and in other parts of South Africa. The forced removals of Black people made way for White only residential areas (Storey, 2018; Gobodo-Madikizela, Bubenzer, & Oelofsen, 2019).

In that same year of 1976, on June 16th, high school students from Soweto started a peaceful march to Orlando stadium. Students wanted to demonstrate their dissatisfaction about the apartheid government's decision to change the medium of instruction in schools from English to Afrikaans. This peaceful march turned to carnage. Many students died at the hands of police including Hector Pieterson[10], whose photo was on the front page of newspapers around the world. The events of that day have framed much of my educational experience and understandings about the relationship between education and power since then. Perhaps the day was a turning point in this iniquitous apartheid order: "The explosion in Soweto …reshaped South Africa's politics and began the process that led to the end of apartheid order and the creation of the new post-apartheid state" (Brown, 2016:2).

Figure 3: Iconic photo of Hector Peterson being carried by Mbuyisa Makhobo. Photographer: Sam Nzima

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[10] Hector Pieterson is probably the most famous of the deaths that day thanks to the famous photograph displayed above showing the body of Hector being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubo. His sister, Antoinette Sithole runs alongside. The photo was taken by Sam Nzima. According to Hector Pieterson's mother's testimony at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mbuyisa was harassed by police after the photograph was shown around the world. He went into hiding in Namibia and has never been heard from since 1979.

This story of violence was based on an understanding of schooling as an induction into a social order. Bantu education was intended to keep Black people on the periphery of society and the order to learn in Afrikaans was an attempt to silence Black people. The young people who protested had not been accorded worth. They were not recognised, their testimonies about their desire to study in English and their own home languages went unheard. When this testimonial injustice occurred, the students tried to use protests to have their plight recognised. But they were unsuccessful because the injustice of indifference by the educational authorities became an injustice of violence by the police.

While Fricker (2007) argues that testimonial justice is key to epistemic justice and Fraser (2001) argues that recognition is key to parity of participation, neither theorist indicates that this is sufficient for justice to occur. Justice requires more than being seen and valued, it also requires getting access to powerful resources, such as knowledge, and participating meaningfully in social arrangements and in epistemic settings.

Hermeneutical (in)justice and (Re)distribution of knowledge

Miranda Fricker (2007) explains that hermeneutical justice occurs where epistemic subjects participate with each other to make meaning of social experiences (see also Dieleman, 2012). To ensure that meaning can be made between people and groups of people, there needs to be some shared understandings of the purpose and process of meaning-making – or a willingness to co-create such shared understandings.

Sadly, this is not always the case. Hermeneutical experiences are often experienced as alienating, uncomfortable, and harmful. Therefore, the harmful nature of these experience is either hidden from the victim or the experience itself is strange to the victim and this causes the victim's inability to make sense of an experience and subsequently fails to communicate this experience intelligibly to others (Fricker, 2007; 2016). Fricker points out that 'intelligibility' in itself requires some shared desire for understanding. The failure to communicate the experience can be caused by a lack of expressive words or descriptive grammar or vocabulary that victims of hermeneutical injustice can use to explain harmful experiences intelligibly. It is also possible that some these alienating experiences have not been collectively interpreted by society, hence the lack of a social descriptive grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, the interpretation of this experience does not exist in the interpretive resources that epistemic subjects can draw on to make sense of this alienating social experience. An epistemic subject in this respect can also suffer from a particular form of hermeneutical injustice: a

hermeneutical lacuna. A hermeneutical lacuna is a gap or "absences of proper interpretations, blanks where there should be a name for an experience which it is in the interests of the subject to be able to render communicatively intelligible" (Fricker, 2007:15). A Hermeneutical lacuna then is a form of powerlessness that prevents epistemic subjects from understanding and expressing their social experiences. This lacuna then hides or eclipses the names and meanings of various social experiences which are in the epistemic subject's best interest to understand.

Lemn Sissay's memoir: An example of Hermeneutical Injustice

Lemn Sissay, a British-Ethiopian author, acclaimed poet, and Chancellor of the University of Manchester, wrote a memoir in 2019 titled *'My Name is Why'* which I found riveting. This memoir elucidates the epistemic injustices he experienced growing up in 1970's Britain, where these injustices were structural and normalised . Sissay grew up with the name Norman Greenwood. The Greenwoods, a foster family whom he loved dearly, brought him up until the age of 12. Sissay was born on 21 May 1967 at St Margaret's House, an institution for unmarried mothers. Sissay's birth mother is Ethiopian and she was a student in Britain when she fell pregnant. Sissay was taken away from his mother at birth and his mother was sent back to Ethiopia. As Sissay was growing up with the Greenwoods, around 1967, racial intolerance was rife in England and the Greenwoods were taunted with having adopted a Black child. Sissay himself grew up with racial slurs and he did not understand how different he was from other children and had questions about himself that he often could not articulate for himself nor get answers from the Greenwoods. The British authorities, with the help of the Greenwoods, documented Sissay's developmental stages from the day he was born, but this information was hidden from him. The files were kept at a data company known as 'The Iron Mountain' and as Sissay wrote: "At Eighteen years I had no history, no witness, no family". Sissay only received his files in 2015 after campaigning for thirty years for access.

> I took the authority to court. How does a government steal a child and then imprison him? How does it keep it a secret? This story is how. It is for my brothers and sisters from my mother's side and my father's side. This is for my mother and my father and my aunts and uncles and for Ethiopians (Sissay , 2019: 2).

Fricker (2013: 53) indicates that hermeneutic injustice is "where for unfair reasons (reasons of local or global hermeneutical marginalisation) someone might be unable to make sense of a patch of their own experience that it was non-trivially in their interests to make sense of — either in their own mind, and/or in its communication to at least some significant social others (such as an employer, or a social worker, or a jury...)." Sissay's story is a painful account of someone having their own understanding of

their life stripped from them. But it has echoes of numerous everyday experiences where someone's understanding of the world is not heard, where someone's values and views are excluded, where someone's language is not welcome. When students' understandings of the world are pre-emptively dismissed or excluded through the social powers at play in the classroom, then we have an example of hermeneutical injustice. Where students are denied true access to the meaning-making of the curriculum, just as Sissay was denied access to the information for him to make meaning of his own life, then we have hermeneutical injustice.

Hermeneutical resources: issues of participation and (Re)Distribution

Hermeneutical resources include knowledge building and knowledge sharing. Fricker (2007) indicates that certain people can participate in knowledge building and sharing or are excluded. Fricker refers to knowledge building as an exercise that builds hermeneutical resources. Hermeneutical resources can be understood as reservoirs of knowledge or reference points which epistemic subjects draw from to make sense and make meaning of social experiences (Fricker, 2007). The meanings of the norms and values of social and cultural practices, such as the literacy practices expected of students, as discussed in Chapter Two, are embedded within hermeneutical resources. Epistemic subjects can also participate in building hermeneutical resources in their capacities as knowers. Hermeneutical resources are important in society because they can facilitate continuity, keep memory, and contribute to history, and they give us the power to make sense of complex situations and to engage in the academic endeavour of building knowledge. Hermeneutical resources can help people to avoid "the danger of the single story" as Adichie Chimamanda shared in her Ted Talk[11] in 2009, where she warned of the problems in understanding complex social situations from one viewpoint only and the dangers of rushing to simple causal accounts.

Epistemic subjects, as Fraser (2001; 2004) argues, are recognised as full members of a particular epistemic setting and their contribution is needed, respected, and valued. Fricker (2007:16) extends Fraser's argument that "to be a knower is to participate in the sharing of information" to enhance hermeneutical resources, to establish shared understandings and interpret social experiences collectively. The collective participation of epistemic agents suggests that there is a degree of trust that epistemic agents establish among themselves. In cases where epistemic subjects are not asked to contribute or simply prevented from participating in the building of hermeneutical resources, or are controlled to participate in particular ways , hermeneutical marginalisation is likely to occur. Some

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[11] https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

pedagogic practices in teaching spaces might be structured in ways that constrain freedom of thought, the emergence of diverse knowledges, and diverse forms of participation.

The most current example to use to explain how hermeneutic resources may be understood is the participation of scientists in finding a vaccine that can prevent people of the world from contracting the dangerous virus, COVID-19. Late in December 2019, scientists reported that an unknown COVID virus, a pneumonia flu-like virus, emerged from Wuhan City in China. COVID-19 rapidly spread to other parts of the world, including South Africa. Countries entered into various levels of lockdowns and curfews to encourage people to stay at home to protect themselves from contracting the deadly virus. At the time writing, people are still expected to wear masks to prevent a further spread of the virus.

Sadly, many people across the world have lost their lives in the wake of COVID-19. Since then, scientists all over the world have been working hard and collaborating with each other to learn more about the virus, to share advice on how to treat COVID-19 and have raced to develop a vaccine. Late in 2020, it was announced that a vaccine has been developed. However, a new variation of COVID-19 was identified in the United Kingdom and in South Africa. At the writing of this chapter, the United States of America (USA), under the administration of President Biden, closed its borders to anyone who had been in South Africa in the previous 14 days to prevent a further spread of this new variation. At the same time, the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, instituted a Lockdown Level three, and a curfew that restricted the movement of South Africans from 21h00 to 5h00 each day. While this was taking place, scientists were again in a race to learn more about the new strains, including the even newer Delta variant, to discover whether the vaccine is effective against the new Covid-19 variations. This brief narrative explains that scientists, worldwide are interacting with each other to share experiences and are giving input based on the research findings on this virus. Scientists then are building and strengthening COVID-19 hermeneutical resources. However, such resources are influenced by the geo-politics of the day.

Geo-politics often require scientists to work within their geographical spaces and also to a large extent sets them up to compete against each other. Current geo-political contexts are structured around economic relationships and so multi-national companies may work across political borders, but their confidentiality clauses which are designed to ensure profits, may prevent necessary collaborations. Market forces can lead to secrecy and hermeneutical injustices that position profit before people. In the USA, for instance, the Johnson & Johnson company manufactured a vaccine. Aspen, a South African pharmaceutical company, bought the licence to manufacture the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for South Africans. Meanwhile, AstraZeneca in the United Kingdom manufactured another vaccine

and sold India a licence to remanufacture there. Similarly, Russia manufactured the Sputnik COVID-19 vaccine which has yet (at time of writing) to receive full approval from various medical bodies, although certain political groups in South Africa are demanding negotiations for a roll-out of the Russian vaccine in this country. Countries that do not have the capacity to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines have to be in a good political relationship with manufacturing countries. While the collaborations between countries, laboratories, and companies in the development of a vaccine are almost unprecedented in modern times and are to be applauded, these were often achieved through political demands made by social groups and they were insufficient to undo the global inequalities such that at the time of writing, vaccines are readily available in the Global North but many countries are severely limited in their ability to roll out access to the vaccines.

Hermeneutical resources are rarely evenly distributed. The issue of redistribution of access to powerful knowledge is a political issue which all universities need to take seriously. If there is not careful understanding of hermeneutical injustices and the need for redistribution of hermeneutical resources universities can serve to reinforce these injustices. People who are prevented from participating are considered to be hermeneutically marginalised. People who experience hermeneutical marginalisation are often discriminated against because their belief systems or social models of understanding do not fit the dominant model of understanding and dominant social and cultural practices. People who are hermeneutically marginalised are further prevented from participating meaningfully with others as peers in their capacity as knowers. Such people often do not have access to resources that can support or sustain their participation.

People who are hermeneutically marginalised may then experience a hermeneutical lacuna as in the case of Lemn Sissay's life experiences that was discussed earlier. A hermeneutical lacuna is a gap that is created in cognitive understanding. Hermeneutical lacunae prevent people from understanding their social experiences for themselves and restrict opportunities to explain these experiences to others intelligibly. Hermeneutical lacunae do not only harm those who experience hermeneutical marginalisation. Hermeneutical resources that are meant to serve epistemic agents in the process of sense-making and meaning-making effectively can also become weakened by lacunae. Hermeneutical resources can also have a lacuna if emerging social experiences are not interpreted to assist society with the process of sense-making, meaning-making, and collective interpretation. It is of vital importance for people to participate with each other to collectively interpret emerging social experiences and to name them in ways that are meaningful to all (Freire, 1970).

The clearest current examples that can be used to understand hermeneutical lacunae are the conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and the ways in which the ex-President of the USA, Donald Trump, spread these among his supporters for political ends. Despite being informed about the dangers of COVID-19 as earlier as February 2020, Trump elected to underplay, minimise, and outright lie about the virus (Woodward, 2020). In the run-up to re-election, he did not want to act in ways that could upset the economy, even though his inaction led to deaths. He was able to manipulate the hermeneutical lacuna related to the virus to his own ends. He repeatedly spread conspiracy theories about COVID-19, deliberately falsified information, and spread obscured meanings about COVID-19 (Trump, 2020).

Mbeki, the former President of South Africa drew on a similar hermeneutical lacuna in insisting that there was no relationship between HIV and Aids, and refusing to support the roll-out of Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs). Between 2000 and 2005, Mbeki's refusal to support the roll out of ARVs claimed more than 330,000 lives and about 35 000 babies were born with HIV infections (Schatterman, 2020; Heywod, 2021). Sadly, "hermeneutical lacunas are like holes in the ozone—it's the people who live under them that get burned" (Fricker, 2007:16). Hermeneutical Lacunae often result in Hermeneutical Marginalisation or the other way round.

Fricker (2007; 2016) explains that hermeneutical marginalisation is a more "buried" form of epistemic injustice. The harm of hermeneutical marginalisation is that it keeps epistemic subjects at the fringes of epistemic spaces, society, and outside cultural practices (an example of such marginalisation is articulated by Biko, (2004) and Mangcu, (2012) The marginalised are prevented from participating in epistemic arrangements in their capacities as knowers. The participation by the marginalised is further compromised because the marginalised cannot access hermeneutical resources that could sustain their participation (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

Since hermeneutical resources need to be enhanced as society transforms and unfamiliar social experiences emerge, it is vital that all are involved in developing a shared understanding and collective social interpretation. Those who are privileged are often the only ones who get to participate in building and enhancing hermeneutical resources because of the unfair advantage of having access to epistemic resources. Those who are marginalised then endure unequal hermeneutical opportunities, unequal hermeneutical participation, and asymmetrical epistemic relationships. Hermeneutical resources then become weakened or less authentic and run the risk of developing a hermeneutical lacuna. Institutionalised practices can be structured in ways that construct certain people as lowly and prevent their participation as legitimate social members (Fraser, 2003). Pohlhaus, (2017:13) indicates

that "there is often an implicit sense that these kinds of wrongs are perpetuated from within epistemic practices or are the result of how epistemic institutions are structured".

Fricker (2016) cautions that hermeneutical marginalisation preserves ignorance because it prevents the flow of knowledge and sharing of experiences that occur in an epistemic setting. Those who are hermeneutically marginalised do not have the chance to participate in giving, sharing, and receiving these knowledges and experiences. Fricker particularly argues that in terms of race, hermeneutical marginalisation preserves and maintains exclusions such as "white ignorance". Fricker (2013) is clear that white ignorance goes beyond hermeneutical injustice. She distinguishes hermeneutical injustices as often being structurally unjust but not necessarily as being epistemically culpable, whereas she indicates that "motivated ignorance such as 'white ignorance' form an important and distinctive class of injustices within our epistemic practices".

Fricker (2013) insists that intentional systems such as white ignorance cannot fit within the idea of hermeneutic injustice, in contrast to the framing by Medina (2013). Fricker (2013: 50) indicates that when the injustices are intentionally wrongful, this is

> owing to some epistemic fault or vice such as wishful thinking, denial, self-interested selectiveness as regards the evidence, suppression of historical context, and so on. Such wrongful epistemic practices would include all those that allowed privileged self-interest to influence what evidence is or isn't attended to, or which interpretations gain assent and are integrated into the motivational system that governs a person or group's agency. Among such wrongful and epistemically culpable epistemic practices we would surely find those pertaining to white ignorance.

In this respect, especially in the South African context, white ignorance is understood in terms of the uncomfortable truths of how apartheid wounded and marginalised Black people and how it privileged white people and how this has meant that multiple hermeneutical injustices remain *and* white ignorance continues (Crais & McClendon, 2014). Fricker maintains that white ignorance is "epistemically culpable" because there are some uncomfortable truths that some white people do not want to face. White people love and admire the late and former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. While his negotiations and reconciliations saved all South Africans from civil war, there is little acknowledgement that the process meant there was still little redistribution of economic goods, hermeneutic resources and more for black people.

Hermeneutical marginalisation prevents society from experiencing what is possible, what can be known and prevents new experiences from emerging. While Fricker (2007) argues that people who are marginalised might struggle to make sense and meaning of their own experiences and render these experiences intelligibly to others, Medina (2017) takes a different position and argues that people who are marginalised know and understand their experiences. Those who marginalise others are the ones who do not know, do not understand the experiences of being marginalised, and they behave in ways that devalue those who are marginalised (Medina, 2017; Pohlhaus, 2017).

My mother and I: Experiencing white ignorance

I used to go with my mother to her Saturday job as a domestic worker when I was still in primary school. The white woman, whose house it was, used to give us tea and bread. During the apartheid era, in white people's houses, black people who worked for white families were only allowed to drink tea or coffee out of specially allocated enamel mugs. It was difficult to drink hot tea out of an enamel mug as the whole mug is hot. My mother politely thanked the woman for the tea and bread, and as soon as she left the laundry room my mother threw the tea and bread down the sink. There was something that looked like hair in the tea and the bread was always wet. We were not sure if it was cat hair or dog hair or this white woman's hair; she was an old woman with silver hair. We were also not sure what made the bread wet. My mother and I wondered if this woman understood the impression she created when she offered us such demeaning tea and bread. My mother never compromised on hygiene, and she made us tea in a flask and packed peanut butter sandwiches, which is what we had for lunch in this white woman's laundry room. I always wondered as a child how she did not see that there was something amiss with the tea and bread that she gave us. As I grew older, I realised that this woman did not see us as people worthy of anything better. She expected us to be grateful in the face of her disrespect towards us.

Figure 4: My mum, Mapeta Christina Khoza, and me - about 2009

Radical Hermeneutical injustices

Segregation and early versions of apartheid in South Africa had already begun before 1870 when gold and diamonds were discovered (Butler, 2009; Reilly, 2016). Cecil John Rhodes, together with other colonial leaders, played a huge role in the colonisation of most African countries for their resources – physical, animal, and human – with no concern as to the implications for the continent. When diamonds and gold were discovered in Kimberly in 1867, and gold was discovered in 1886 in the Witwatersrand, the white man descended from all over the world to set up gold and diamond businesses. The British government with Cecil Rhodes at the head of these discoveries "dismantled African institutions and reconstituted a fictionalised African society for the purpose of domination" and expansion of land (Reilly, 2016:76). Black people, the rightful custodians of their land and these resources were not counted and were excluded in the decisions and agreements that were made about them, about their lives and about the resources that belonged to them. The blueprint for apartheid was already set long before the National Party made it legislation.

The effects of such radical hermeneutical injustice are permanent and those who suffer from these forms of injustice might not recover from its effects (Fricker, 2016). Josè Medina (2017) views radical hermeneutical injustice as hermeneutical death. Hermeneutical death damages a human being's interpretive capacity, they lose social power and become voiceless. Their social status in social and epistemic arrangements is violated and they cannot participate meaningfully in the processes of sense-making and meaning-making. Freire (1970) sees this injustice as oppression which can limit the chances of a social member to change her situation to attain freedom and justice (Sporre, 2015; Freire, 1970).

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Steve Biko's essays in his book *"I write what I like"* demonstrate how South Africans suffered such a hermeneutical death because of the ideology of apartheid. Apartheid violated and wounded South Africans in material form, in body, mind and spirit (Noah, 2016; Ndaba & Smith, 2017; Storey, 2018) Biko reminds us how Apartheid rendered Black people powerless, voiceless, and stripped them of self-love and dignity (Biko, 2004; Mangcu, 2012). Black people could not participate in the process of "meaning-making and meaning-sharing practices" and this caused anger and frustration among them (Medina, 2017:41). Apartheid defeated them and many did not have the power to resist against the oppression. Instead, many Black people turned their frustration towards themselves and developed self-hatred. A Black man, as Biko stated, was "completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing yoke of oppression" (Biko, 2004:31).

Fraser (2001:2004) argued that misrecognition of social status can be restored if social members resist practices that oppress them. Black people in South Africa indeed resisted apartheid through various political parties and social movements, but the apartheid government pushed back brutally. The Sharpeville massacre is a case in point.

On 21 March 1960, the Pan African Congress (PAC), under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe led a protest in Sharpeville, outside Johannesburg. The PAC's Positive Action Campaign was against the notorious Pass Laws Act of 1952. This law forced black people, from 16 years of age to carry a passbook at all times. The passbook was known as the *dompas* and it symbolised the intent of the apartheid government to control the lives of black people. Black people were arrested by police if they failed to produce the *dompas* in South Africa. On the day of the march, black people were met with the brutality of the apartheid government police. The police opened fire on the protesters and 69 black people were killed and 180 black people were injured.

Figure 5: Sam Nzima's photographs of the "Sharpeville Riots"

Soon after the Sharpeville massacre, the ANC and PAC were banned and went underground alongside other political movements that remained to continue the struggle. Many Black political activists were detained without trial and tortured mercilessly. Many of them died gruesome deaths at the hands of the state security branch police, as was the case in the death of Steve Biko. Some skipped the country to continue with the struggle against apartheid in countries outside South Africa. Others were psychologically and physically crippled. My brother, Mainato Khoza, whom we fondly call Bra Joe, was a member of Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement. He was one of those who suffered psychologically and physically at the hands of the state security branch police.

Here is my brother's story

One night in 1976, a few months after the student riots of June 16, the security branch police stormed our maternal home. About four or five big white policemen and one black policeman violently kicked our front door open. They had come to detain my brother, who was sleeping in his room. My mother, my grandmother, and my other four siblings, watched helplessly as the policemen pulled apart the ceiling of our home. They were searching for political documents that my brother hid in our makeshift ceiling. That was the one of the 'last straws' to our home which needed fixing every time it rained or

when there was strong wind. My mother put big stones on the roof which was made of used corrugated iron sheets to strengthen it and prevent it from being blown away.

My brother was detained without trial for six months. During that time, we did not know where he was detained. While my mother went up and down, tirelessly seeking answers at various prisons around Johannesburg, looking for my brother; all that time the security branch police were torturing him mercilessly. My mother and my siblings and my grandmother prayed the *Novena* for my brother every night. I could sense the urgency and the sincerity of my mother when she said the *Memorare,* asking the Blessed Virgin Mary for assistance though those trying times:

> Khumbula Maria virigo elinesisa kakhulu ukuthi akuzange kuzwakale naphekade ukuthi kukhona owake wadelwa nguwe ebalekela kuwe nqabayethu encenga ukuba umphuthume enxusa ukuba umkhulekele, ngithi ngisuswa yithemba elinjalo ngiyakhawuleza ngiza kuwe Virigo emavirigweni mame sengimi phambi kwakho ngikhala mina engiyisoni. E! Nina weZwi, ungadeleli amazwi ami. Kanti uwezwe ngomusa, uwavume kahle. Amen[12]

The police injured my brother badly; he was left paralysed from his waist down and we never thought he would walk again. My brother was released in that crippled and wounded state. The police just left him outside the gates of Krugersdorp prison, perhaps they hoped my bother would die there. My brother with enough strength and courage, crawled into a nearby music store to seek help. A lady whom we called Aus Dani was an assistant at that shop, and she happened to be our neighbour and friend in Kagiso Township. Aus Dani made arrangements for my brother to be taken to hospital and informed my mother. It took my brother many, many years to recover from his injuries.

REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.
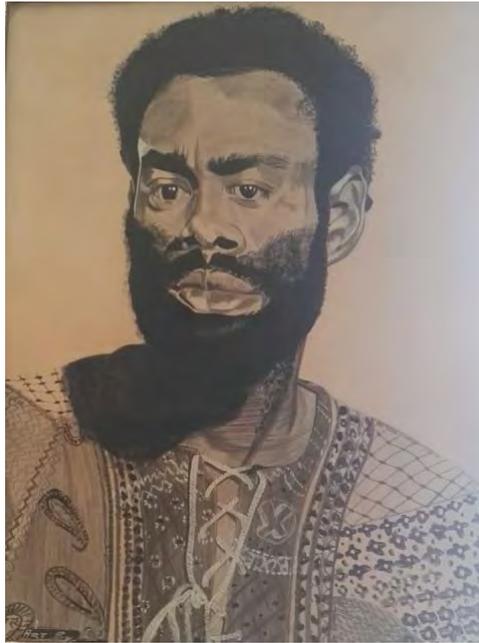
Figure 6: Bra Joe. A portrait by Casswell Mahlangu from about 1982

Our experiences as a South African family have made us especially sensitive to issues of justice. My brother suffered one of the worst forms of injustice. He was harmed physically and mentally by the police. As Biko explains, my brother was stripped of self-love and self-worth. But he did not suffer a hermeneutical death because although he, and most of the citizens of the country, were excluded from official "meaning-making and meaning-sharing practices" (Medina, 2017:41), he had a strong epistemic setting in the form of the Black Consciousness Movement. This movement gave him an understanding of himself as worthy that was counter to the dominant narrative of the land. The movement meant that his testimony was worthwhile, and his understandings of the world were significant. He was able to enjoy both testimonial justice and hermeneutical justice within the illegal spaces of the Black Consciousness Movement. But he paid an enormous price for that. He almost paid with his life.

The apartheid government was well aware of the dangers of having a black population that believed in themselves, that recognised their experiences and narratives, and that made powerful meanings for themselves. The use of physical violence by the state was matched with the violent dismantling of all powerful epistemic spaces. These examples may be dramatic but I think they serve to tie small everyday injustices to larger systemic ones. These examples may also be considered to be 'distant history', but we live with the consequences of these systems every day. It is to the modern day and to higher education that I now turn to tie some of the concepts discussed in this chapter to the topic of my research.

Epistemic (in)justice in higher education in South Africa: Decolonising the curriculum

It is somewhat unsettling that so many years later, long after apartheid has ended and South Africa is a democracy, that the 2015 and 2016 #Mustfall students' movement occurred. These protests were about the colonial nature of education in the country as much as they were about the rising cost of higher education. Post-apartheid, it seems, institutions of higher education had not done enough to decolonise the curriculum. Many authors agreed that the process of decolonising the curriculum was not a new discussion in Higher Education in South Africa. As Badat (2015:82) argues:

> It is not that prior to the student protests there had not been critical voices that had raised issues of epistemology, curriculum and the like, but that they have gained little traction at universities and in higher education and have remained largely marginal concerns. It is also not the case that there has been either a uniform unwillingness or no efforts to tackle colonial, racist, patriarchal discourses and the culture of whiteness. The reality is that for reasons that are important to understand, initiatives to date have yet to succeed in uprooting inherited cultures and practices and bringing about the far-reaching transformations that are necessary and long overdue.

At the University of Cape Town (UCT), the statue of Cecil John Rhodes had still stood in central place long after the colonial and apartheid orders were officially abolished. "The sight of colonial glorification was a permanent assault on the senses of many Black students" (Mpofu-Walsh, 2016:76). This statue was a constant reminder of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid that placed their parents and their forefathers into generational poverty. The hegemony of colonialism and apartheid were systems that dehumanised Black people in South Africa in all facets of their lives but the legacy meant that this continued in various forms to this day (Heleta, 2016).

Chumani Maxwele, a student activist, at UCT, threw faeces at the statute of Cecil John Rhodes on 9th of March 2015. Chumani Maxwele's protest action was followed by discussions and seminars under the leadership of the Student Representative Council and later by various splinter student activist groups. These discussions were concerned with issues of racism and who it was that was valued at UCT. One student asked 'If UCT is not racist what is the statue of Cecil John Rhodes still doing there?' (Godsell & Chikane, 2016:57). A group of students then started a protest by occupying Bremmer Building. This is when the #RhodesMustFall student movement was born. Students at UCT mobilised

against what they identified as institutional white supremacist capitalist patriarchy at the university and called for a complete decolonisation of UCT, including the curriculum. The formation of #RhodesMustFall opened the debates on decolonising the curriculum across universities in South Africa. The movement took many forms at different institutions and included a #Rhodessowhite focus at the university where I am registered, which continues to be named after the arch-colonist. While the events and the consequences of the protests are contested (see, for example, Booysen, 2016), they highlight the sense that the South African higher education system is not fulfilling its mandate (Waghid, 2009).

Although South African higher education was free from colonial and apartheid rule, the curriculum, including teaching and research, arguably changed too slowly and too minimally to reflect the norms and values of African traditions, African philosophies, and indigenous and African knowledge systems (Heleta, 2016; Mbembe, 2016). Across all three pillars of higher education, teaching and learning, research and even community engagement, there remains a strong influence of Eurocentric epistemologies and knowledge systems. The process of decolonising the curriculum is complex, and it is intertwined with the unjust consequences of colonisation, imperialism, and apartheid in South Africa (Godsell & Chikane, 2016). In South African higher education institutions, there are now ongoing discussions, seminars, conferences, and workshops to unpack what decolonising the curriculum means, which are appropriate actions to take, and what processes should be followed to decolonise the curriculum in South Africa.

Hlatswayo and Alexander (2021) conducted research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to explore how academics understood the notion of 'decolonising the curriculum'. They found that academics often understand that the process of decolonising the curriculum required them to 'dismantle' knowledge systems that are Eurocentric and participate in putting African knowledge systems and epistemic traditions at the centre of the curriculum and their teaching practice. However, Hlatswayo and Alexander (2021) also found that there were significant pockets of "confusion, ambiguity, vulnerability and the disruption" that is brought about by decolonisation and "increasing militarisation and student protests on campus" (Hlatswayo & Alexander, 2021:55).

Academics have epistemic power, and their status as knowers plays a huge role as the ones who translate the curriculum from the field in which knowledge is produced to the field in which it is taught. They are the ones who develop learning material and teach and assess students. It is crucial that the process of decolonising the curriculum does not leave academics behind. In my current job, I work closely with academics as part of academic support in the development of learning materials and

professional development. The transformation office of my university has handed out a template with categories that need to be addressed to decolonise the development of learning material and pedagogic practices. Lecturers must give evidence that all categories have been satisfied. I am referred to as a 'project manager' and one of my roles is to ensure that academics have satisfied all the requirements to "decolonise their study material". It is perhaps unsurprising that a complex ideological, intellectual endeavour has become something with which academics must comply and which we monitor through the completion of a checklist, given that universities often adopt bureaucratic and managerialism principles "entirely separate from this academic body" (McKenna, 2020:81)

The process of decolonising the curriculum requires more than the participation of academics and researchers. Zembylas (2015) raises a concern that there is not much theory that could be used to explain the meaning and the implications of decolonising the curriculum and pedagogic practices in higher education in South Africa. Zembylas, (2018:1) advises that while the process of decolonising the curriculum is taking place, there is a need to consider how "transformative education discourses and practices […] reclaim humanity in knowing and knowledge-making". There is a real risk of simplistically suggesting that Western Knowledge is bad and African knowledge is good without considering that there are no pure forms of knowledge and all are implicated in each other.

Zembylas (2018) argues that while there has been much interest in what decolonisation might look like at the level of curriculum structure and content, less has been said about pedagogy. While this study is not about decolonisation, it was important for me to indicate that I collected the data and undertook the analysis just a few years after the student protests when conversations around the nature of knowledge and the ethos of the university were everywhere. The immediate context no doubt has had bearing on my thinking about what epistemological access and epistemic justice within pedagogy might look like. Furthermore, as I indicated in the section on Testimonial Injustice in South Africa, the immediate #Mustfall context took place within my understanding that formal education is not always a place of justice, an understanding which first took stark form in my own life back in 1976.

Participatory Parity and Epistemic Justice

Participatory Parity is a social justice principle conceptualised by Nancy Fraser, which requires social arrangements to "permit all (adult) members of society" to interact with each other as equals in social life (Fraser, 2003:36).

Participatory Parity entails that the rules and regulations of social and cultural practices need to be structured in ways that allow all people to participate with others as peers in social life and in social arrangements. The norm of Participatory Parity makes provision that social practices that promote social injustice need to be identified, dismantled, and replaced. Participatory Parity further promotes an understanding that people and their contributions are worthy of recognition, and their dignity and participation must be respected as important and necessary. If people are recognised as equals, people have a right to fair opportunities and fair access to social goods. Social goods such as health care, housing, and a good education and educational resources should be available to all. Having access to social goods sustains participation of people in various social arrangements (Bozalek & Leibowitz, 2012). Fricker, (1998) argues along the same lines of equality that since people in general are knowers, they should be able to participate in epistemic spaces in their capacity as knowers.

Fraser (2003) explains that Participatory Parity is constituted by the two concepts of social justice already referred to as distribution and recognition. Redistribution is associated with claims for fair and equitable access to social and economic goods and resources. Recognition comes from Hegelian philosophy and is associated with claims for recognition of culture and difference. Fraser, (2000) explained that (re)distribution and recognition need to be understood under one framework. These two social justice concepts cannot be separated because one influences the other; redistribution is the result of recognition and redistribution is not enough without recognition (Fraser, 1997).

If these concepts were to be separated the politics of cultural differences and the politics of equality would be decoupled. This decoupling would make it difficult for multicultural groups to recognise each other's divergent politics as valid, reconcile each other's cultural politics and recognise each other as equals or peers. Secondly, the separation of redistribution and recognition could cause a division among people where the dominant group remains in power and can suppress the non-dominant group. Lastly, the separation of redistribution and recognition would make it difficult to advocate for social justice for all because differences in cultural, social, and political standing would be seen to be means of exclusion and separation (Fraser, 2008). Fraser (2013) writes extensively, for example, about problematic identity politics that have emerged through the focus on recognition without considering redistribution.

Fricker's (2007) concepts can help us with managing the need for both recognition and redistribution within the concern for epistemic justice by arguing that people in general know something that can be useful in any epistemic space. Therefore, people can participate in epistemic spaces or social arrangements in their capacity as knowers. In this understanding, people can draw from each other's

knowledge and experiences and participate with each other in their capacities as knowers to achieve both recognition of social status and redistribution of social goods to sustain social status.

Fraser (2003; 2000) argues that Participatory Parity is needed to enable social members (in the case of this study: speakers and hearers; students and lecturers) to work towards justice through recognition and distribution. To do this they would need to examine their interactions "to illuminate injustices in areas that are easily concealed, thereby providing a set of tools for expanding and deepening relations of justice, as well as resisting encroaching injustices in areas where previous advances are under threat" (Holscher & Bozalek, 2020:8). Fraser (2003) makes it clear that unjust tendencies need to be identified, dismantled, and replaced with those that are structured in ways that permit all members to participate with others as peers in social arrangements, to maintain the aim of Participatory Parity. Participatory Parity, therefore, is not applicable only in social structures, it is also a personal norm and value where people need to constantly self-check and guard themselves from promoting unjust practices, subordinating, and excluding others especially those who are in positions deemed to be of lesser status in society.

Conclusion

While Fraser's (2000; 2001; 2003) work is largely focused on the ways in which large social structures work at the macro level, I have found the concept of Participatory Parity, and the related concepts of recognition and distribution, to be useful at a more micro level for looking at the feedback between lecturers and the participants in my study. Fricker's (1998; 2003; 2007; 2013; 2016; 2017; 2018) concepts of testimonial and hermeneutical justice have helped me to bring Fraser's into conversation at this more micro level in ways which I believe to be useful. By bringing these concepts loosely together, I have attempted to construct a theoretical framework which can allow me to best address my research question: How do experiences of feedback enable epistemic access? I now look at the key concepts related to feedback as they are discussed in the literature, and I draw on some of the theoretical framing presented in this chapter to do so.

Chapter Three - Feedback is an experience. It is a process of reflection

Introduction

The feedback triangle (Yang and Carless, 2013) is a good place to start in an understanding of feedback. They suggest that successful feedback rests on three related but separate issues. One is the actual form and content of the feedback. What is the feedback suggesting? What message is it giving? Is that message clear? Another issue is the social and interpersonal negotiation of the feedback. This relates to the affective nature of feedback and its provision and interpretation. The third issue is that of the organisation and management of feedback. Is feedback only given on summative assignments or can students use the feedback to enhance their work? Is assessment understood as being for measurement of learning, and feedback a message in this regard, or is assessment understood as being integral to the learning process, and feedback is a pedagogical practice directed towards this? This chapter draws on the literature on feedback to consider all three issues.
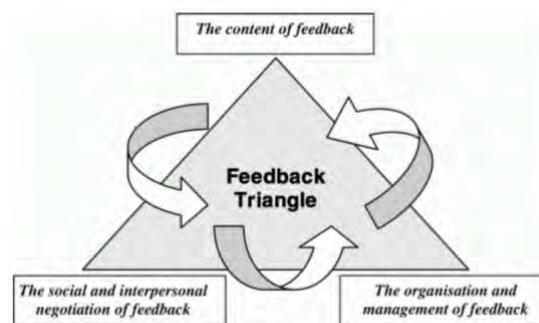
Figure 7: The feedback triangle (Yang & Carless, 2013)

Feedback is a practice that opens up pathways of understanding, enables us to see what is hidden from view, understand what is not clear yet and to look forward, imagine and prepare for the unknown future. In higher education feedback has received much attention from scholars for a very long time. Many scholars have developed models and proposed strategies of constructing and using feedback. The effort to understand feedback is fuelled by an understanding that feedback can have a positive effect on students' learning in higher education. While feedback continues to be a site of confusion

for students, and sometimes a wasted effort for academics, feedback continues to attract much attention and research (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Winstone, Nash, Rowntree, & Parker, 2017; Henderson, Ryan, & Phillips, 2019; Carless, 2019).

As discussed in Chapter One, this study aims to answer the research question: How do experiences of feedback enable epistemic access? The research question of this study is not unusual because there have been many research projects that have been carried out that examine students' experiences of feedback (Evans, 2013; Nicol, Thomson & Breslin, 2014; Carless, 2019; Winstone, Pitt & Nash, 2021). Many researchers have adopted different theoretical lenses to interpret undergraduate students' experiences and perceptions of feedback in higher education (Blair, Curtis, Goodwin, & Shields, 2013). In this study, however, I identified a gap where feedback has not, to my knowledge, been studied directly through the Social Justice and Epistemic Injustice lens. This study then tries to interpret five undergraduate student teachers' experience of feedback through the lenses of Nancy Fraser's Participatory Parity and Miranda Fricker's theory of Epistemic Justice.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Miranda Fricker and Nancy Fraser argue that participation is central for social and epistemic justice. The idea of participation is also applicable to feedback as a socially constructed pedagogic practice. This study then argues that feedback can play a role in enabling students to participate as novice knowers. Academics as experts in their knowledge fields and related literacy practices can use feedback to guide students to interpret norms and expectations, enabling students to gain this important epistemic access.

This study presents the narratives of five undergraduate participants who were learning to become teachers for the foundation phase. Like all other students in higher education, the participants needed to gain epistemic access to make sense of the knowledge and make meaning of the academic literacy practices of teaching practice for themselves. For the participants to achieve this, feedback is needed to make the knowledge accessible. If feedback can achieve this, feedback would have enabled students to gain epistemic access to teaching practice. In the reminder of this chapter, I offer a consideration of the concepts that are key to my study and I discuss the literature related to feedback on students' assessments with a particular focus on its potential to enable epistemic access.

Epistemic Access

The term Epistemic Access became widely used in higher education by many scholars to "signal intent to move beyond physical or formal access to meaningful access to the 'goods' of the university" (Muller, 2014:255). Morrow (2009) explained that students needed to gain

epistemological access[13] that could enable them to become full members of the fields of study and related academic literacy practices students were pursuing. Morrow then explained that gaining such access means "learning how to become a successful participant in academic practice" (Morrow, 2009:79). Epistemic access then is not about transferring or transmitting knowledge for students' consumption but rather is concerned with enabling students to gain access to specialist knowledge. Students need to learn how knowledge is produced and structured in the fields they are interested in (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

As Boughey and McKenna (2021) explain, specialist academic knowledge is specific to disciplines. Specialist academic knowledge is structured and includes descriptions, principles, and explanations that students need to learn and the very nature of these varies between fields. More importantly, specialist academic knowledge is often abstract and theoretical; and thereby, it "allows us to imagine worlds that do not yet exist and to move beyond the contexts we know" (Boughey & McKenna, 2021:93). However, students are usually not familiar with specialist academic knowledge, or with the peculiar literacy practices such knowledge is disseminated through, and it does not make sense to students yet. Students come to university with knowledge and experiences they acquired from their socio-cultural contexts, including their schooling backgrounds. Although the knowledge and experiences that students bring are not the same as specialist academic knowledge, and the academic experiences students would encounter at university, the knowledge that students bring with them should not be ignored or discounted. Students' knowledge is valuable because it lays the foundation and can strengthen the acquisition of specialist knowledge. Students then can navigate specialist academic knowledge if they are afforded opportunities to gain epistemic access (McKenna, 2010; Boughey & McKenna, 2016). Gaining epistemic access into literacy practices of the various disciplines exposes students to different ways of being and doing and to different norms and values that underpin these literacy practices. The next section discusses the relationship between epistemic access to knowledge and taking on the literacy practices by which such knowledge is communicated.

Epistemic access and literacy practices

New Literacy Studies (NLS) is a body of research about the nature of academic practices. Brian Street (1997; 2003; 2005) played a significant role in developing our understanding of how literacies function in social and educational contexts. The New Literacy Studies research promotes the idea that various

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[13] Morrow used the term 'epistemological access' but I would argue that 'epistemic access' is more appropriate as it is access to the knowledge and ways of making knowledge that are needed rather than access to the meta-level *study of* the ways of making knowledge.

social members in various cultural contexts have literacy practices that social members within a particular cultural context understand, appreciate, and value. Literacy practices are shaped by the history, culture, and context that operates within a particular social setting. Literacy practices also shape the ways of being and doing for social members within that social setting (Gee, 1999). A university is a social structure that houses different academic and disciplinary literacy practices. When students take on literacy practices, they get exposed to very different norms and values which students are expected to learn. Furthermore, in order for students to be recognised as members of the field they need to participate as novices in order to learn, enact, and embody these norms and values. Students therefore need epistemic access so that they can begin to make sense and make meaning of these practices.

In this understanding of literacies, the teaching and learning of literacies goes beyond the 'technical competencies' and includes far more than reading and writing. Literacy practices entail taking on a role which has significant implications for identity (Boughey & McKenna, 2016, 2021). Students at university all have access to multiple literacies as they become part of various groups. Students learn the 'languages' and the ways of being and doing and learn how to demonstrate the norms and values that the various groups appreciate, promote and value (Gee, 1999). Brian Street identified two models that help us to identify the contradicting understandings of literacy practices in the academy and beyond.

The autonomous model of literacy

Street (2006) identified two models of literacy called the autonomous model and the ideological model. The autonomous model works on the assumption that meaning is separate from language. The meaning (in the case of the university this would entail the cognitive work of knowledge making) is seen to be autonomous of the communication. The focus then in any miscommunication is often on the language (grammar, spelling, vocabulary, accent, and so on) rather than engagement with the knowledge. The assumption of the autonomous model ignores the reality that there are many literacies, and these literacies intersect within society, and within social structures, and all of them serve a contextualised purpose. When it comes to learning, the understanding of the autonomous model is narrow because the model suggests that all that people need to do in order to learn is to master the technical skills of reading and writing in a particular language in order to make sense and make meaning of the texts that are written in that language (Boughey & McKenna, 2016).

Unfortunately, teaching practices in general, knowingly or unknowingly, adopt the autonomous model where students are expected to learn and make sense of concepts with the assumption that if their

English[14] 'skills' are strong enough, they will cope (Boughey & McKenna, 2016). If teaching practices continue to work from the premise of the autonomous model, the process of sense-making and meaning-making might be compromised. Instead, strategies that promote rote-learning and surface levels of learning might be encouraged and students will only learn by regurgitating knowledge in memorised chunks of text. Also, students might be restricted from drawing from existing knowledge they learned from their socio-cultural contexts and might continue to be framed as 'decontextualised learners', whereby their chances of succeeding or failing are seen to emerge only from the skill set they have, such as motivation, cognitive ability, and language skills (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

The ideological model of literacy

The ideological model on the contrary, emerges from an understanding that literacy practices are social and cultural. Each grouping has sets of literacy practices that are familiar and common to them. Literacy, including language is influenced by the context, the history, and the culture in which the literacy practice operates. The emergence of Tsotsitaal, as discussed earlier, and how it was confined within a particular group of society, is a case in point. People develop literacies to serve their needs, and the varied use of language is one of them. The ideological model suggests that a person can take on specific literacy practices if they can make sense of the context and its norms and values.

Students come to university from all walks of life and how they speak and communicate is rooted in the contexts they come from. Students encounter multiple, different, and strange practices in the university and in the different fields of study they pursue at university. Literacy practices are not a set of skills students are expected to master automatically without a necessary consideration of what they mean and how they impact on their identity.

The university is an epistemic setting that is focused on knowledge-making and dissemination. The norms and values of the various disciplines are valued, promoted, and practised through various epistemic arrangements such as teaching, taking on research, presenting at conferences, publishing in various accredited journal articles, and through books and book chapters. Academics in the various disciplinary practices have specific practices that are familiar and generally common within a specified discipline. For instance, mathematics has a mathematical language that makes sense to the academics who are specialists in a particular mathematics discipline.

Even concepts such 'structure', 'coherence', 'voice' and 'argument', which may be valued in many academic disciplines, will have slightly different meanings and emerge in slightly different forms in

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[14] English is the medium of instruction in every university in South Africa, with only a few institutions offering dual language instruction in Afrikaans. There are only just beginning to be a few programmes offered in indigenous languages in the country.

Political Studies and in Anthropology, for example. Students for their part, can find these literacy practices strange and mysterious given that they are entering as novices. Students will become familiar with these literacy practices as they take them on at university, as the knowledge, norms, and values that underpin these literacies become explicit and meaningful to them.

Where academics understand this ideological account of literacy practices, they may work hard to make them explicit for students and thereby enhance the chances of epistemic access. Academics can use feedback, as one pedagogical practice, to enable students to gain epistemic access by making the norms and values and the related practices explicit (Street, 2006).

As discussed in Chapter One, students in South African universities come from diverse socio-cultural and multi-language backgrounds. Some students, especially those who come from poor schooling backgrounds, are not coping well with English. Most black students who grew up in South African townships, were exposed to more than three languages before the age of six (Makalela, 2017). In some social and township settings for example, black people grow up speaking SeTswana, IsiXhosa, or IsiZulu, as well as English, as they become socialised in the English language. They would often also speak Afrikaans or Tsotsitaal.

There is an emerging pedagogic approach within South African universities known as Translanguaging. "The translanguaging pedagogic approach is in response to the language practices of the students, which include many dialects, accents, and high levels of multilingualism" (Hurst & Mona, 2017:132) Translanguaging enables students to use their diverse knowledge competencies in teaching and learning spaces at university (Ngcobo et al., 2016; Makalela, 2017). Ramchander (2020) conducted a study in which group work was used to give students a chance to use translanguaging to help each other to understand the assignment question, and also used reflection as conceptual framework. Ramchander (2020:91) states that "when multilingual students are put into groups, there is a natural gravitation towards translanguaging between the medium of instruction and home language", and also found that while group work enabled students to share ideas, students used translanguaging to understand the assignment question. In this way of understanding, students were possibly able to make sense and meaning of the literacy the assignment promoted.

Literacies in this understanding are about language use within a particular context and with the understanding that language and context and meaning are inseparable. Literacy is thus not universal, generic or neutral. Furthermore, the learning of specific literacy practices is not automatic. This means, for students to learn, acquire, and enact a specific set of literacy practices, they need to understand the norms that underpin the practices, make sense of them, and make meaning for

themselves. Hence the norms and values of that particular literacy practice need to be explicit and transparent for the student who is expected to demonstrate them. When the norms of the discipline are explicit, students will be able to make meaning and participate in the literacy practice.

Literacy practices are always political. Because literacy practices emerge from the norms and values of the context, as discussed earlier, they will always be infused by power. Many decolonial scholars have begun to question the extent to which current literacy practices are related to the colonial order rather than to knowledge production generally (Hlatshwayo & Shawa, 2020). It is therefore important to consider that if we teach in ways that do not make the literacy practice explicit to students we not only make them harder to take on, we actually protect these literacies from students' scrutiny. If we prevent students from critiquing the power that is inherent with these practices, then we are expecting students to comply and accept the norms and values of the practice without question. In this way, we are supressing students' agency from emerging. Literacies are social practices that evolve through history, evolving cultures and contexts, and it is an act of social justice act to enable students to understand, participate in and to challenge the literacy practices (Fricker, 2007; Boughey & McKenna, 2017).

Boughey and McKenna (2021) argue that making literacy practice explicit is a significant pedagogical challenge and a responsibility that has to be undertaken in ways that open the possibility for critiquing the expectations of the university itself. Herein lies a tension which Janks (2000) terms an 'access paradox'. By teaching in ways that make the norms and values explicit we enhance the likelihood of epistemic access and therefore enhance epistemic justice. But teaching in such ways also potentially reinforces the power of academic practices that are colonial in nature, students achieve epistemic access at the cost of epistemic justice. This is a tightrope balancing act because academics need to always consider how their power impacts on students and how students might make sense of those literacy practices. Feedback then, is a pedagogic practice that could ideally be used to help students make sense of these literacy practices, but in making the practices explicit, space should also be created to critique and challenge such practices.

Feedback: a literacy practice in a particular epistemic setting

In Chapter Two, I discussed how higher education is an epistemic space with a constant flow of knowledge, knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, production, and reproduction. Feedback lends itself well as a pedagogical platform to facilitate this constant flow of knowledge from academics to students, students to students, and students to academics. Thus, feedback potentially creates conditions for the distribution of knowledge to take place. Academics become the sources of

knowledge when using feedback to make the expectations of the assignment clear to students, including making the norms of academic literacies practices explicit. Students become the sources of knowledge when feedback encourages them to draw from their socio-cultural backgrounds and their learning in the university to strengthen their process of sense-making and meaning-making. When students become sources of knowledge, academics can gain insights into diverse and rich knowledges and experiences of students' socio-cultural backgrounds (Fricker, 2003; Snowball & McKenna, 2017). As discussed in Chapter Two, academics and students can interchangeably take their roles as hearers or speakers and participate in their capacities as knowers. Making spaces which encourage uptake of these interchangeable epistemic roles encourages the agency of students to emerge through the process of feedback.

Students as epistemic agents and knowers in the feedback process

Students' agency in the feedback process can ensure that aspects of Miranda Fricker's theory of Epistemic Justice and Nancy Fraser's norms of Participatory Parity as discussed in Chapter Two can come into being. Within the Epistemic Justice theoretical framework, students as epistemic agents have capacities that can influence the process of feedback (see Fricker, 2007). Fraser's (2000; 2003) status model calls for a deep understanding of students' social status to enable them to participate and interact as peers in the feedback process. Students are knowers because they bring multiple knowledges and related literacies from their socio-cultural and schooling backgrounds. Therefore, the participation of students as epistemic agents, as knowers with social status, entails that feedback does not function as a means through which information is simply channelled to students (Nieminen, Tai, Boud, & Henderson, 2021); but rather as a hermeneutical resource as discussed in Chapter Two. If feedback were to function as a hermeneutical resource, students could learn how knowledge is formed and shared. In that case, students could participate as peers, developing and sharing understandings, and interpreting knowledge collectively, in a dialogue. While students interact as they interpret and make meaning, they could also share internal feedback that they generate naturally during these interactions. In this understanding, students themselves are sources of information for each other, as discussed earlier (Nieminen et al., 2021).

Student's internal feedback: The agency of students that enables the process of feedback

Internal feedback is associated with an ongoing inner dialogue that students generate naturally and which occurs when students monitor and assess their own learning or their own work. Internal

feedback is the starting point of learning and developing capacities for self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-assessment, and self-regulation (Orakci, 2021; Nicol, 2021; Nicol & McCallum, 2021; Nicol & Selvaretnam, 2021). The pedagogic capacities develop if students engage in activities that require them to make their own judgments (Cowan , 2010). Evaluative judgment in particular can be understood as "an analytical, deliberative process based on conscious reasoning" (Joughin, Boud, & Dawson, 2019:583). In this respect, internal feedback also allows students to compare their work against their learning goals, feedback from their peers, tutors, or academics. In the diagram below, Nicol, (2021) outlines an approach to feedback which shows the centrality of comparison that occurs during the process of internal feedback and its iterations with other sources of feedback.
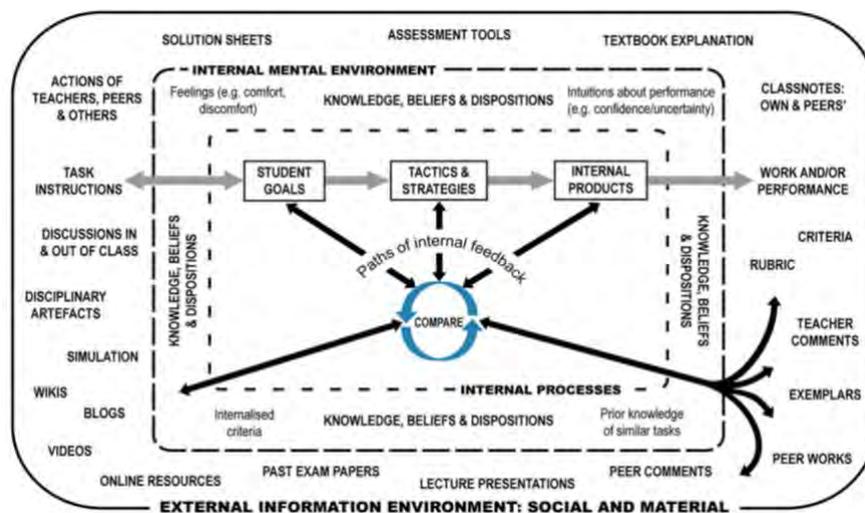
Figure 8: Nicol (2021) shows the centrality of comparison during internal feedback

When students review each other's work and generate internal feedback they simultaneously make comparisons between their own work and the one they are reviewing and this makes them generate "ideas about the content, approach, weaknesses and strengths in their own work and about how to improve it" (Nicol & McCallum, 2021:3). Therefore, internal feedback is a process of change and yields what Nicol (2021) refers to as "new knowledge" (see also Nicol & Selvaretnam, 2021). As Paulo Freire, (1970) indicated, knowledge is created and recreated, invented and re-invented, produced and reproduced. Students need to reflect, reason, make comparisons, take action, be part of, and generate new knowledge (Nicol, 2021).

Feedback as a dialogical practice

Feedback, ideally, is a dialogue, because academics need to communicate with students in ways that enable meaning. Feedback needs to encourage students to do something, to understand more fully, and to act on feedback. The dialogue of feedback can either be verbal or written. Ideally, students could respond to the lecturer's feedback by acting on it to continue the dialogue. Thus, if feedback needs to be a two-directional practice, regardless of whether it is synchronous or asynchronous, then feedback can potentially encourage students and academics or tutors to interact with each other meaningfully. Nicol (2010) argues that because feedback should be a dialogue, it needs to be flexible and adapt to the learning needs of students.

It can be argued that dialogical feedback has the potential to activate the norm of Participatory Parity. According to this norm, students would have full social status in the dialogical space of feedback and be able to participate with other students, with tutors and academics in the feedback dialogue. Students' success at university is often constrained by their prior schooling experiences, as discussed in Chapter One, but students were admitted to university and they came with multiple literacies, experiences and knowledge, and a dialogical approach to feedback can be a central means to ensuring epistemic access (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Dialogical feedback has the potential to create conditions for the distribution of knowledge to take place. Although students may not be familiar with the academic practices they are expected to enact, feedback dialogues can make these academic literacies explicit, thereby enabling epistemic access (Boud, 2010; Bozalek, Mitchell, Dison, & Alperstein, 2016). The access to social goods (knowledge) scaffolded by dialogical feedback then enables meaningful participation in the dialogue. The benefit of gaining epistemic access is that students will have the goods that help them to sustain their participation in the feedback dialogue. Thus, feedback would become a reinforcing cycle. Even though students are novices in the various disciplinary practices, gaining epistemic access can then enable them to be recognised as novice members of a field who are making meaning through feedback dialogue. Feedback, in this understanding, is a social practice that encourages academics and students to democratically interact with each other meaningfully (Waghid, 2009; 2011; Ajjawi & Boud, 2017). If feedback practice as a whole can do all this, feedback will surely enable participatory parity.

The ethics of care in (dialogic) feedback practice

Many moral philosophers have taken up the term 'Ethics of Care'. Joan Tronto (1989; 2010) developed a theoretical framework of the ethics of care. The traditional models of ethics have excluded concern for 'care' and to a large extent the notion of 'care' has been feminised and is seen as a woman's

responsibility rather than a fundamental human ethic. Tronto (1989:16) argues that care is a fundamental "species activity" and a set of principles that is governed by socio-cultural practices or different ways of living, value systems, and rules. The practice of care is associated with living well and caring for others as far as possible. Care is a necessary condition for human life and care as an activity, demonstrates features that make us human. Tronto's (1989; 2010) framework of care includes moral elements of caring, which are associated with attentiveness. Caring-for is associated with responsibility, and caregiving is associated with competence and trust. This framework can be applied in social life and to various social structures. The practice of care needs to be purposeful. In this understanding, the practice of care needs to look towards meeting the needs of people, and mediating the power relations that have the potential to undermine care, and taking particular action to enact the practice of care (Tronto, 2010). Tronto's framework can be used as "a normative framework to judge the adequacy of care in education policies and practices from critical perspectives" (Zembylas, Bozalek & Shefer 2014:202)

Zembylas et al (2014) applied Tronto's ethics of care to understanding critical pedagogies in higher education. They examine Tronto's ideas on care and responsibility, in higher education. Bozalek et al. (2016) used diffractive reading where they analysed their practices of giving and receiving feedback within the framework of ethics of care. Bozalek et al. (2016:836) promote an understanding that:

> there is a need to wrestle with honest feedback with the acknowledgement that our vulnerability may be uncomfortable. However, if given in a caring manner with opportunities for dialogue, feedback can significantly contribute to improvements in practices for both teaching and learning. Feedback does not need to be extensive to lead to learning – just one sentence can provoke a thoughtful response leading to change and improvement.

Xu and Carless (2017) argue that the practice of feedback can help students to develop competencies to regulate, take hold of or control their own learning. In the same breath, Morrow (2009), as discussed earlier, reflects Xu and Carless's argument that students must be doing something not only to regulate their learning, but also to gain epistemic access.   The practice of feedback then surely must be having some strategies that could be used to enable students to gain these competencies which can extend to giving feedback to their peers. One of the strategies that could be adopted can be found in the elements of care such attentiveness, responsibility, responsiveness, trust including affective aspects (Yang & Carless, 2013). It is in this understanding that this section draws on Tronto's ethics of care in the practice if feedback in Higher education.

Zembylas et al (2014) argue that Tronto's political ethics of care framework can enrich efforts of transforming pedagogic practices and maintain the effort towards enacting and living the social justice

agenda. The ethics of care raises awareness that taking responsibility, one of the social justice requirements for curriculum and pedagogic practices does not always translate to care, understanding, and empathy for students. Instead, the ways of practising pedagogy might objectify students, perpetuate inequalities among them, favour those who are privileged, and exclude others. Critical pedagogies raise awareness that power and emotions come into play during pedagogic practices, which can be mediated responsibilities. The process of making sense and making meaning is always determined by underlying power and emotional states in critical pedagogy (Zembylas , 2013).

Critical pedagogy is an educational principle that is associated with Freire's (1970) Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Critical pedagogy promotes an understanding that students are active political agents who need to interrogate and challenge dominant ways of thinking through dialogue (McArthur, 2010; Costandius & Bitzer, 2015). The practice of teaching and learning suggests that there are power differentials where the academic is more powerful than students. The power of academics is a given, since, as discussed in Chapter Two, academics are specialists in their fields; they are good informants who are more knowledgeable and more qualified than students. Academics' specialist knowledge might influence academics to come through as dominant when they teach. Therefore, students might be expected to be compliant and present their knowledge and understanding in particular ways. Critical pedagogies encourage academics to present their assumptions and knowledge with an awareness that students also come from spaces of knowledge and experience; students as knowers can also formulate a view and express an opinion. Therefore students also need a need space to critique these assumptions based on their knowledge and experience. Feedback is one of the practices that could give students a chance to critique academic literacies with more clarity.

The following section discusses the moral elements of care with reference to feedback. As argued earlier, feedback is a pedagogic practice that can potentially expect a demonstration of these moral elements of care. I draw on Zembylas et al. (2014) to argue that caring is central to being ethical and that an ethics of care can be understood through moral elements of attentiveness, responsibility competence, responsiveness, and trust in the practice of feedback.

Attentiveness in the feedback practice

Attentiveness is a moral element of caring, and it relates to caring about others. Attentiveness means being ready to attend to the needs of others, listening to what others have to say, trying to understand their needs, and pointing to other related alternatives for students and understanding who they are and what they bring with them. Feedback then cannot be just a comment or a message or advice. Instead, feedback needs to encourage students to consider different and diverse world views, and students can use the lecturer's feedback as a starting-point to consider these world views. Peer

feedback or peer review feedback can also be a form of feedback that demonstrates the moral element of attentiveness.

Carless (2019) suggests that feedback can be designed as a spiral. This suggests that feedback can be an ongoing conversation rather than a simple submission for marking assessments. Carless (2019) suggests that open-ended questions are a means of ensuring such a spiral dialogue. This spiral approach requires attentiveness and can lead to ongoing learning beyond the specific assignment (Carless, 2019). Attentiveness as a moral element of ethics of care also echoes Fraser's (2000; 2003) claim of recognising students' contribution and learning needs as legitimate members in a feedback dialogue.

Responsibility in feedback practice

Responsibility is another moral element of caring and relates to caring for others or taking care of others. Responsibility is also a "willingness to do something which will improve a situation" (Bozalek et al., 2016:830). Feedback is often described as a practice that helps students to improve their work, therefore academics take the responsibility of constructing feedback to encourage students to enhance their work (Winstone, Pitt, & Nash, 2021). This can be understood as academics caring about students' learning through feedback.

On the students' part, in the feedback practice, responsibility is associated with self-regulation, which Yan (2020) explains comes in three stages: preparation, performance, and appraisal. Preparation entails analysing the task, setting goals, and planning. Performance entails completing the tasks and monitoring progress. Appraisal entails evaluating the task and reflecting on the outcomes of the task. Therefore, students who have developed a capacity for self-regulation are aware of their learning shortcomings and find appropriate approaches and strategies to attend to these shortcomings (Carless, 2019).

There is also a responsibility on academics who need to consider how students might receive feedback that they give students about their work. Bharuthram & McKenna (2006) report on the writer respondent intervention and indicate the need for academics to consider that feedback is not a platform for consumption of knowledge, but instead, it is a platform that helps students to develop an identity within a specific setting. Academics could consider that feedback can help students to construct knowledge. Sadler (2010) argues that some academics might not know how to construct meaningful feedback. Giving meaningful feedback takes time, and academics need institutional support to construct feedback that enhances students' learning.

Competence is another moral element of caring, and it relates to caregiving. Caregiving is an action or hands-on work that is put in place to care for others. The action of giving care occurs when circumstances demand that social members need to care for others. The moral element of caregiving is competence, which means that caregiving requires the carer to be competent or know what to do to care for others. To be competent "assumes that the person has the knowledge and resources to do a good job" (Zembylas et al., 2014: 204).

In the context of the feedback process, academics display caregiving by demonstrating competency in giving students feedback that they can use meaningfully. Students also play a role in caregiving, where they demonstrate competency by appreciating and using the feedback that academics give them to enhance their learning. Caregiving in the practice of feedback plays a reciprocal role where one good turn deserves another. However, studies show that many factors prevent both students and academics from giving and using feedback effectively. Students do not always use feedback effectively, and academics do not always give students feedback that they appreciate and can use meaningfully. Therefore, students might fail to develop the feedback literacies that can allow them to use feedback competently. This should not be simplistically understood as academics 'not caring', rather this can emerge from a lack of staff development around feedback literacy and the constraints of workloads and institutional structures in enabling academics to implement feedback in pedagogically sound ways.

O'Donovan, den Outer, Price, and Lloyd, (2021) indicate that acquiring feedback competencies is not easy. Their findings show that students' feedback needs are contrasting and diverse, complex, and individualistic, making it difficult for academics to construct feedback that all students want. Winstone et al. (2017) identified barriers that prevent students from using feedback. They report that students do not understand feedback because they are not familiar with the academic terminology used in feedback. Feedback renders them powerless because they have not developed appropriate strategies to approach feedback. In other cases, students might use the parts of feedback they understand and leave the rest, which defeats academics' efforts in giving students feedback. Carless (2012) argues that if students do not understand feedback, they might not be able to compare their work with the feedback or evaluate their work against the feedback received.

Xu and Carless (2017) propose that students need support through an interplay of cognitive scaffolding and social-affective support to help them navigate the process of feedback. Cognitive scaffolding can encourage students to understand, make sense and meaning of disciplinary literacy

concepts and thereby develop self-regulating strategies. Social affective support can prepare students to accept that even though feedback might be negative, it is meant to guide them in deepening the understanding of what the task requires from them, and applying and enacting the academic practices the assignment requires. In this way, students are likely to develop trust in the feedback process.

Henderson et al. (2019) conducted a study that demonstrates the difficulties of both students and academics. They found that students needed verbal, personalised, detailed, and specific feedback that guided them on how to improve their work. Students also needed feedback with positive comments rather than negative statements. The needs of students in this study presented difficulties that academics encounter in the feedback process. Firstly, academics do not have sufficient time to give meaningful feedback because of there being too many students in their classes. Secondly, some academics do not have the resources that allow them to give students meaningful feedback.

Several researchers have argued that the managerial principles that govern universities in the current era threaten the role of a university as a place of teaching and learning for the public good (Leibowitz, 2012; McKenna, 2020). Bailey and Garner (2010) reported performance management demands for compliance on academics, and other forms of managerialism, have increased pressures on academics. Academics, seemingly, do not get enough support at an institutional level in their effort to give feedback. The growing number of students makes it almost impossible for academics to give feedback that students could use productively and in a sustainable way (Hounsel , 2007; Henderson et al., 2019). Students at a university learn through nurturing, care, and discomforting pedagogic practices to enable them to examine their assumptions and critique traditions and conventions (Zembylas, 2015). Increasing managerialist expectations can increase the workload and often "shape the amount, form and quality of the feedback they [lecturers] can provide" (Bailey & Garner, 2010:195).

The competing demands and constraints discussed above indicate that the moral element of competence for students and academics might be undermined in the process of feedback. Students might continue to ignore feedback and academics might also be discouraged to give meaningful feedback through no fault of either academics or students. The competencies that are needed to ensure that the ethics of care might also be compromised.

Responsiveness in feedback practice

Responsiveness is another moral element of care identified by Tronto, and it is associated with care-receiving. This means those who receive care respond to the care in particular ways, and the care they receive can contribute to whom they become. Morrow's (2007; 2009) definition of epistemic access, discussed earlier, demonstrates the moral element of responsiveness. If students have gained

epistemic access, they can learn how to participate in academic practices as full members. Morrow's argument then shows that gaining epistemic access needs to be followed by some visible outcomes that benefit students as individuals and their immediate communities. In line with Davids and Waghid (2016:35), gaining epistemic access also suggests that students participate in epistemic settings with an open mind and a willingness to consider "a plurality of opinion" and recognise that other's world views are important, necessary and enriching. These are some of the attributes that teaching and learning at university aims to cultivate in students.

The role of feedback in this understanding would be to respond to the needs of students to help encourage them to demonstrate some of the attributes that were discussed earlier. While the role of feedback is to help students improve their work, this role of feedback needs to go beyond and consider other relational dynamics. These dynamics include students participating in making their immediate environments conducive for others and themselves. Students can achieve this if feedback encourages them to embody and enact the norms and values of the literacy practices students are interested in. Feedback in this understanding would consider these structures' social structures and practices and situate itself in that context. Feedback in this interpretation cannot be generic and operate as surface levels of knowledge; feedback would be unpacking "these practices [...] and [...] draw into deploying them" (Esterhazy , 2018: 1303-1304; see also Bozalek et al., 2016; Dawson et al., 2018).

Winstone et al. (2020) support the idea of developing feedback literacies as part of the graduate attributes that students need to gain during their years of study. Their study shows that students who develop feedback literacies can make valuable judgments that can translate to students' life-long learning efforts as part of graduate attributes. Malecka, Boud, and Carless (2020) explain that students who know how to use feedback can appreciate and respond to feedback in a sophisticated manner and reflectively, as discussed earlier. In this line, Dawson, Carless, and Lee, (2020) propose that the development of feedback literacies also needs to include cognitive challenges for students. Their proposal looks into the future, where students will be expected to solve disciplinary and work-related problems. The cognitive challenges take away the tendency to require students to reproduce knowledge when they act on feedback. Instead, feedback would require students to demonstrate "higher-order thinking, decision-making and problem-solving in using feedback comments" Dawson et al. 2020:4). Such feedback then does not tell students what to do. Instead, feedback requires students to act decisively on a particular learning aspect. This feedback approach can activate students' agency, stimulate internal feedback, and encourage students to step out and seek related feedback resources independent of academic feedback, as discussed earlier.

The second graduate attribute is that students who develop feedback literacies can make sound judgments for themselves. Carless (2020:3) reiterates that "it is insufficient for students to rely upon evaluative judgments made by the teacher". The third graduate attribute is that students who develop feedback literacies can participate and contribute to critical discussions beyond learning at university. Such students are emotionally ready to take feedback that might be uncomfortable (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Dawson, Carless, & Lee (2021) argue that even though feedback can challenge students emotionally, feedback needs to prepare students for the realities of life beyond the university boundaries. As part of a human communication process, feedback can also be as fluid and subjective as human beings are. Students then have to develop resilience and rise above the emotional constraints and focus on what feedback can do for them as novices who are soon to enter the practices of the discipline of their choice. The process of feedback at university could include discipline-specific strategies that can help students to develop the resilience they need beyond their learning spaces, moving into their professional lives.

Winstone et al. (2020) recommend that feedback focuses on discipline-specific literacy practices, to translate, interpret, and align with the intentions of the curriculum design. If feedback is aligned with the curriculum, students might see its role in their learning, appreciate the feedback and act on it appropriately. Developing feedback literacies also suggests that feedback needs to align with assessment practices and assessment opportunities that students are exposed to. Feedback literacies then put feedback at the centre of whom students are becoming as they take on the practices of their disciplines. If students develop feedback literacies, they can be prepared for their roles as graduates of their disciplines (Dawson et al., 2021). If feedback can achieve all this, feedback would demonstrate the moral ethics of responsiveness.

Trust in the feedback practice

Trust is the last of the moral elements that come from Trontos's ethics of care. Zembylas et al. (2014:205) explain that "conditions of trust are created where reliance can be developed through the caring practices of others". This means that academics give feedback with the expectation that students will act on it. In the context of feedback practice, trust is a critical moral element because of the emotional and affective nature of the practice, as discussed earlier. As a moral element, trust carries virtues such as empathy towards students, handling students with sensitivity to preserve their credibility, and willingness to listen to students in ways that make feedback acceptable even when the feedback is critical (Carless, 2012).

Students have expectations from academics when they hand in their assignments for assessment. While students wait for feedback, they can become vulnerable because the assignment tasks are their

academic investments. Students spent valuable time crafting the assignment tasks. Secondly, students open their assignments and themselves to the scrutiny of academics. This can make students vulnerable and anxious because they do not know what kind of feedback to expect (Bozalek et al., 2016). As indicated earlier, literacy practices entail taking on a 'way of being', which has identity implications. Students might not separate the task from themselves, since assignment tasks are their investments.

On the other hand, vulnerability is necessary for learning, because it can jolt students to take control of their learning by engaging actively with feedback. Ajjawi et al. (2021) explain that students can overcome their vulnerabilities if interpersonal relationships exist in the feedback process. Students in such relationships can understand the expectation of the task, feel cared for, and develop trust in the academics and in the process of feedback itself. Therefore, dialogical feedback can enable such trust and active participation in the feedback process. As discussed in Chapter Two, academics in the feedback process play the role of good informants who evaluate students' participation in the academic practice through assignment tasks. Academics as good informants also facilitate the feedback process to guide sense-making. Such feedback will likely enable students to develop trust in feedback process and academics (Bozalek et al., 2016; Carless, 2019).

In order to develop trusting relations in the feedback process, students and academics could work together as partners and develop pedagogic relationships (Barnett, 2007; Carless, 2019). These pedagogic relationships can foster shared understandings, a collective interpretation of academic literacies, and give students the chance to trust themselves (Carless, 2012). Hill, Healey, West, and Déry (2021) argue that pedagogic partnerships can trigger students' cognitive and affective processes and decrease anxiety. Students instead develop positive emotions, enthusiasm, resilience, and enjoyment of the learning process. Pedagogic partnerships have a long-term effect on students because they learn to be self-confident, feel safe, and trust themselves.

However, as discussed earlier, the barriers that prevent students from using feedback might violate the students' trust in the feedback process. Therefore, understanding feedback as "a process, designed by educators, undertaken by learners" can function if there is an element of trust, more importantly on the part of students (Dawson et al., 2018:34). Trust is a critical moral element in feedback because of the emotional and affective nature of relations in feedback. As a moral element, trust carries virtues such as empathy towards students, handling students with sensitivity to preserve their credibility, and willingness to listen to students to understand how students experience feedback (Carless, 2012). Since feedback presents a challenge in higher education, as discussed earlier, the moral element of trust might not be obvious. The literature shows that peer feedback

seems to be one of the options that could indicate the level of trust that can emerge. Schillings, Roebertsen, Savelberg, van Dijk, and Dolmans (2021:1102) explain peer feedback as "all task-related information that a learner communicates to a peer of similar status which can be used to improve his or her academic writing performance". As indicated in earlier discussions, ideally, students and academics need to be participants in the feedback process and participate in their respective capacities as knowers. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, power differentials might emerge and undermine the role of students as novice knowers. Peer feedback then can potentially ease the power of academics as knowledgeable others in the feedback process.

Furthermore, peer feedback can encourage students to have trust and empathise with each other. Peer feedback can also encourage students to see themselves, evaluate their work, and identify their learning needs in relation to others (Carless, 2020). I now turn to the literature on peer feedback to discuss the moral element of trust in the ethics of care.

Peer feedback: As an element of trust in the feedback process

The most common practice in peer feedback occurs when students assess each other's work and give each other feedback before they submit for the lecturer's final assessment. In some cases, students give each other peer feedback anonymously. However, van Heerden and Bharuthram (2021) explain that anonymity in the peer feedback process is not always possible or desirable. Besides, the issue of trust might not be evident if students do not know who is reviewing and giving them feedback. Trust can emerge since students prefer peer feedback because it is not threatening, and is often "emotionally easier to receive than feedback from a tutor or a lecturer" as discussed earlier (van Heerden & Bharuthram, 2021:2).

In peer feedback settings, students exchange roles as feedback receivers and givers or providers of feedback. Zhu and Carless (2018) explain that students who receive feedback from others develop metacognitive awareness, engage with feedback more meaningfully, and enhance their work and performance. Peer feedback also exposes students to different ways of being and doing and enables students to learn about different strategies and different and creative ways of approaching their assignment tasks (Carless, 2016). Therefore, giving and receiving feedback can benefit student learning (Ibarra-Sáiz, Rodríguez-Gómez, & Boud, 2020). However, peer feedback is not without its challenges. Students need to be carefully inducted into the ethics of care so that they can provide developmental feedback that encourages engagement and reflection. As with academics, students must be encouraged to move away from corrective single-loop feedback, towards dialogical double-loop and spiral feedback.

Bharuthram and van Heerden (2020) conducted a study to examine how undergraduate students use peer and tutor feedback. They found that students tend to use tutor feedback more than they use peer feedback. Students used tutor feedback because they regarded tutors as experts and had doubts about feedback from their peers. Furthermore, Bharuthram and van Heerden (2020) indicated that the students generally used tutor feedback passively without interrogating the feedback. However, Bharuthram and van Heerden (2020) explain that the fact that students preferred tutor feedback might have been an indication that students were taking responsibility for their learning and they were in the process of developing self-regulation (Zhu & Carless, 2018). Ibarra-Sáiz et al. (2020:151) concluded that students "should become the protagonists of their learning" and tutors could take up their role as facilitators of the feedback process in which students participate.

In another study, van Heerden and Bharuthram (2021) focused on how students acted when they received feedback from peers they are familiar with. They found that students were more comfortable with feedback from the peers they were familiar with, and a more dialogical communication became possible. Students engaged with feedback and accepted it because it was honest, trustworthy and "made with good intentions" (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020:9).

Origgi (2012:30) shares insight on the moral element of trust, which can be applied to the process of feedback. Origgi (2012) explains that we are "wired to learn cultural information from authorities, and trust them even when we do not fully understand what they are telling us". This insight is relevant in the practice of feedback. Students come to the university to learn to become participants in the disciplinary practices, and they need to gain epistemic access to become these qualified practitioners, as discussed earlier. Therefore, students trust academics because lecturers, as discussed in Chapter Two, have all the credentials that qualify them as good informants. Academics have a disposition that Origgi (2012) calls "natural pedagogy' which makes students trust the lecturer's position of epistemic authority.

Orrigi (2012:230) explains that trust also is rooted in deference to authority, which is in turn rooted in cultural practices that promote an "almost unconscious commitments to the authority" of culture, which represents deep respect for authority, adults, and parents, including teachers. Origgi (2012: 230) makes an example that "many folk-epistemological beliefs" or "unreal loyalties are entrenched in ancient loyalties we are committed to since our childhood". Deference authority in the context of feedback practice suggests that students accept lecturers' epistemic authority without question and without critiquing the lecturers' teachings. As discussed earlier, feedback could adopt the strategy of critical pedagogies and encourage students to critique dominant thinking and dominant conventions.

Having discussed the concept of ethics of care in relation to feedback practice, I now turn to feedback as a pedagogic task of reflection.

Feedback as a pedagogic task of reflection

Our experiences often call us to reflect, and as we reflect, we gain insights that lead us to make decisions and take specific actions. We do not act randomly; we make comparisons between this experience and that. This also applies in pedagogic settings. Feedback is one of the pedagogic practices that mediates and places students in reflective modes, making them compare, and leading them to take appropriate learning actions. Feedback requires reflection on the part of the person giving it, so that it is meaningful and constructive. Feedback also requires reflection from the person receiving it, so that they can implement it.

In higher education, reflection is a process that can help students to make sense and meaning of various learning experiences. Cook, Dow, and Hammer (2020) are concerned that feedback practice does not always support students' reflection practices. "Reflection encourages students to engage in purposeful thinking, participate in a cycle of inquiry, and form reasoned judgments around a goal" (Cook et al., 2020:1144). However, Ryan (2013) convincingly argued that students in higher education rarely know how to reflect, and do not know that reflection can help them to develop disciplinary knowledge more meaningfully. Even though students may knowingly or unknowingly reflect on aspects of their learning, their reflection is often simplistic and operates on surface levels (Ryan, 2013).

Bharuthram (2018) published a research article in which she explores what reflection means to students in higher education. Her main findings show that students understand reflection at a superficial level and do not understand that reflection is a practice that requires them to engage in a 'conscious engagement' to affect their learning. Bharuthram (2018:815) also found that reflection can stimulate emotions, and she recommends that "it is through reflection that students can develop criticality and, thereby, begin to view reflection as an important lifelong learning strategy". In that regard, Ryan (2013) offered insight into the four R's of reflection: reporting or responding, relating, reasoning, and reconstruction.
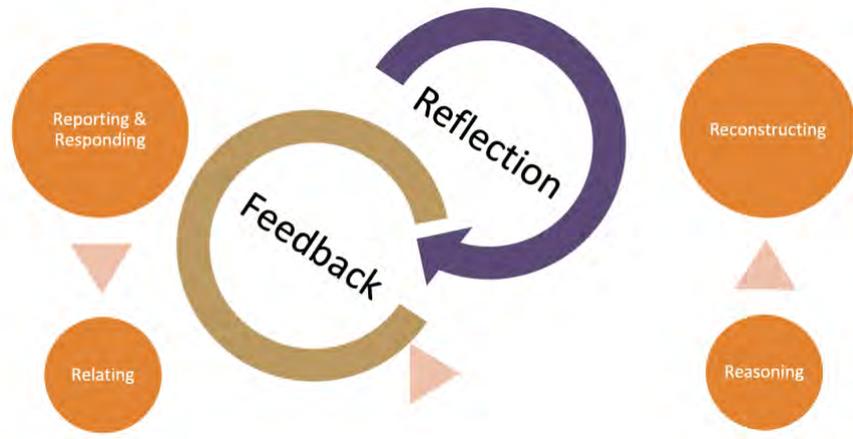
Figure 9: The Four R's of reflection (adapted from Mary Ryan 2013)

In the next section, reflection is discussed at the "level at which the feedback operates" (Carless, 2019:706). It is important to note that dialogical feedback underpins the discussions that follow, feedback here is conceptualised as a conversation rather than as 'marking'.

Encouraging reflection at the level of responding

Ryan (2013) explains that reflection at the level of responding or reporting is the most basic form of reflection. Students consider significant aspects of the assignment task at this level, form opinions about it, and identify how they emotionally and intellectually connect to the task. When students reflect, they hold internal dialogues with themselves and consider the expectations of the assignment task, the strategies, the knowledge, and competencies they need to respond to. Feedback can help students to reflect on how to weed out irrelevant elements and encourage them to take appropriate actions to strengthen the task. Ryan (2013) explains that this level of reflection can prepare students for more sophisticated reflection levels, which are discussed later.

David Carless' (2019) single and double loops of feedback are used as examples of feedback reflection at the level of responding. Carless (2019) explains that single loop feedback focuses on particular or singular aspects of the assignment, and it can help students improve performance. Single loop feedback is then concerned with short-term learning solutions, and single-loop feedback is rarely transferrable to future assignment tasks. Single-loop feedback generally operates at the surface level where feedback judges how students performed the task and identify correct and incorrect aspects (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The message that comes from single-loop feedback then focuses on the product at hand, responding to that particular assignment. Single-loop feedback is corrective in nature and treats students' assignment tasks as products. However, Wisniewski, Zierer and Hattie (2020)

argue that corrective feedback has value in students' learning to help students understand their errors and avoid them and should not be dismissed entirely. The idea of single-loop feedback also demonstrates similarities with what Boud and Molloy (2013) call 'Feedback Mark 1'. Mark 1 feedback tells students what to do and when students have used this feedback, the feedback loop is complete, and the feedback loop can be closed.

Carless (2019) however, argues that closing the feedback loop, whereby students have implemented the corrections called for in the feedback, may not always suggest that students are learning effectively and independently. Single-loop feedback might not encourage students to reflect at the deeper levels as they would simply be responding to the immediate requirements. Carless (2019) understands that feedback can influence processes of reflective thinking and taking action. He states that "productive reflections often involve higher-order processes of self-regulation. These are consistent with the main purpose of feedback: to enable students to self-regulate their own learning" (Carless, 2019: 708). This requires deeper levels of reflection than simply responding

Encouraging reflection at the level of relating

Reflection at the level of relating includes personal temporal knowledge and experiences. At this level, students can demonstrate what they know about academic norms and what they are learning concerning their past and related knowledge and experiences. Feedback that operates at the level of reflection-relating encourages students to have internal dialogues because students' "internal conversations are inherent in the reflexive process, whereby one decides how and when to act, based on their understanding, commitment, values and priorities in any given context" (Ryan, 2013:147). Feedback that operates at this level could require students to draw on temporal knowledge, experiences, and literacies they took on from their varied socio-cultural backgrounds and bring these to the academic settings.

In Chapter One, I argued that students come with knowledge, experience, and multiple literacies they learned from their socio-cultural backgrounds, including their schools. This knowledge and these experiences and literacies practices can serve students well in taking on disciplinary literacies (McKenna, 2010) but only if feedback is appropriately given. Feedback that encourages reflection at the level of relating can be structured to remind students that their related background knowledge and experiences are a powerful resource that they can draw on. Feedback can also direct students to external related sources of feedback (see Nicol's 2021 model).

As I discussed in Chapter Two, epistemic agents can draw on hermeneutical resources to understand how specific literacy norms are understood and interpreted. Feedback can guide students towards these hermeneutical resources. Epistemic agents themselves are hermeneutical resources because

each one of them participates in epistemic settings in their capacity as knowers. Students, therefore, can draw on each other's strengths, bring related competencies, share understandings, and collectively interpret the task and plan how they might respond.

Having discussed two aspects of Ryan's (2013) reflection model, responding, and relating, I now move to reason, the third level of reflection.

Encouraging reflection at the level of reasoning

Feedback reflection that operates at the level of reasoning can be associated with comparing situations that an individual makes to make sense of experiences that emerge. In the context of this study, reflection at the level of reasoning suggests that students are encouraged through feedback to think about learning experiences during and after the particular task and make comparisons between these learning experiences. Students may also anticipate or imagine what might happen in future learning (Orakci, 2021). Feedback that stimulates reflection at the level of reasoning drives students to make "intellectually rigorous analysis" of their assignment tasks (Ryan, 2013: 147). Students are then likely to engage in intellectual exercises such as making comparisons, negotiating meaning, bargaining, and generating new knowledge. To facilitate feedback that encourages students to make comparisons, Malecka, Ajjawi, Boud, and Tai (2021) conducted a study where feedback was designed using an ipsative design. Ipsative is a term used in psychology to indicate forces that encourage individuals to make choices.

Malecka et al.'s (2021) study entailed a process whereby students compared their work with feedback and with their previous work. Malecka et al. (2021) found that ipsative feedback enabled students to identify where they improved and focus on areas that needed their attention as the feedback process moved along. Apart from feedback from lecturers, students independently sought feedback from other sources and used such feedback meaningfully. The process of comparing and making changes helps students to develop self-regulation learning strategies that were discussed earlier (Winstone et al., 2017). Malecka et al. (2021) also found that ipsative feedback lessened the barriers that often prevent students from engaging with feedback. The literature repeatedly indicates the importance of students having an opportunity to use the feedback on the specific task for which it was given before they can reflect on the implications for future tasks. Students were expected to engage with the feedback and use it meaningfully on that specific task (Malecka & Boud, 2021). Lastly, ipsative feedback also gives students and academics a 'longitudinal overview' of the feedback process and plots how feedback develops students' learning, and how the practice of feedback could also improve. Feedback in the ipsative design allowed students to look back at feedback and look forward to feedback.

The fourth aspect of reflection proposed by Ryan (2013) is that of construction. Reflection at the level of construction is the most complex form of reflection because it is difficult to achieve and cannot be measured. Students must have learned to reflect at the levels that are discussed above before being able to reflect at this level (Ryan, 2013). Feedback that operates at the reflection-construction level seemingly requires students to conceptualise new ideas, find new strategies, and adopt new perspectives (Waghid, 2009; Carless, 2019). Nicol and McCallum (2021) conducted a study that could be used as an example of feedback encouraging reflection at the level of construction.

Nicol and McCallum (2021) found that students were making multiple comparisons and giving each other feedback. Students managed to generate more detailed, elaborate, and rich feedback without the feedback input from their teachers when they were scaffolded into providing generative feedback to one another. Students also generated "productive feedback when comparing their essay with essays of a lower quality than their own, as well as with those of a higher quality" (Nicol & McCallum, 2021:12); and they also found that students' metacognitive knowledge increased through reviewing others' work and also gained insight into different approaches and different perspectives, including self-regulation abilities.

The earlier discussions indicate some elements that could be included in developing feedback literacies. Heron, Medland, Winstone, and Pitt (2021) argue that the practice of feedback is complex because feedback carries characteristics of various pedagogic practices, if not all. Therefore, the development of feedback literacies needs to consider students' agency and knower status even though students are novices of their disciplinary literacy practice. The discussion on peer feedback indicates this. The dialogical nature of feedback needs to be structured in ways that allow sharing diverse understandings, negoting meaning, clarifying expectations, and collective interpretation at the centre of the feedback process. The moral elements of ethics of care show that feedback can be pragmatic and encourage students to act on feedback measurably and practically. Lastly, the four R's of reflection also show that reflection is a learning process that can encourage students to act on feedback more decisively in apparent ways. The figure below is a visual representation of what could be considered as the pillars of feedback in developing feedback literacies.
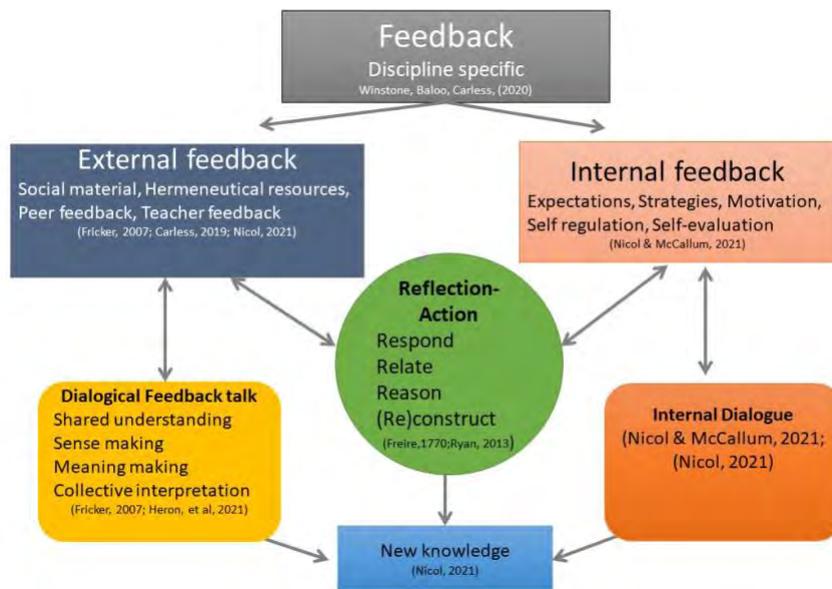
Figure 10: The pillars of feedback in developing feedback literacies

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the characteristics of feedback that could make disciplinary literacy practices explicit to students. The discussion throughout this chapter looked at conceptions of feedback in the literature that operates within a social and epistemic justice frame and can expose learning possibilities that might be hidden from the view of students, thereby enabling possibilities for epistemic access. This highlighted that students' agency is a necessary condition to make the process of feedback effective. The literature suggests that feedback can contribute to epistemic justice if the ethics of care are integrated into the feedback practice. Lastly, feedback is a reflective experience, therefore the practice of feedback needs to develop the levels of reflection needed for students to act on feedback by taking the necessary actions that the levels of reflection promote. It is to the actual methods that I used to collect and analyse my data to which I now turn. As I will argue in the next chapter, the use of a narrative methodology to consider five young student teachers' experiences of feedback as they study to become teachers is, in my view, closely aligned to the theoretical framework I attempted to build in Chapter Three. I also took the concepts from this chapter into account in my methodology and attempted to ensure that my methodology entailed deep levels of reflection and an ethic of care.

Chapter 4 - TIGHTENING THE NUTS AND BOLTS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign.

But stories can also be used to empower and humanise.

Stories can break the dignity of a people.

But stories can also repair that broken dignity

Chimamanda Adichie (2009)

Introduction: Finding My Way Through Narrative Research

This chapter outlines the reasons I adopted a narrative inquiry for the study methodology. I outline choices I made along the way which, more importantly, were influenced by the research design and researcher responsibilities that underpin a narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry enabled me to answer this research question: How do experiences of feedback enable epistemic access? Narrative inquiry allowed me to share a few of my experiences of feedback with participants and take participants along with me to try and understand their experiences of feedback. Clandinin & Connely (2000:189) state that a "narrative inquiry is a study of experiences, and experience is a matter of people in relation contextually and temporality. Participants are in relation, and we as researchers are in relation to participants. Narrative inquiry is an experience of the experience. It is people in relation, studying with people in relation".

The names chosen by the five participants were Bourney, Kgase, Bumblebee, Lande, and Marsha, and their stories are shared in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. The fact that participants were studying to become teachers, as shown in their stories, made them novices in the field of teaching. In this regard, drawing on Nancy Fraser's parity of participation, discussed in Chapter Two, I recognised that participants had social status (see Fraser & Honneth, 2003). I also recognised, drawing on Miranda Fricker's theory of epistemic injustice, that participants were knowers, as discussed in Chapter Two (see Fricker, 2003). Participants had multiple opportunities to reflect with me on what feedback meant for themselves and their learning and the kind of feedback they needed. My study also encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences of feedback before enrolling for university study and how these experiences influenced their understanding of feedback at university as discussed in Chapter Three. Narrative inquiry encourages researchers and participants to also look to future experiences. On the part of participants, they had a chance to imagine how their own feedback practices could look

when they were qualified and practising teachers one day. My own future narratives comprise the recommendations I make in the final chapters of the thesis.

Narrative Inquiry Defined

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology that is rooted in the social sciences and humanities, and it is used to study lived human experiences in various social and epistemic settings (Clandinin & Connely, 2000). Although experiences are social and may be common among people, many experiences are personal and are shaped by the historical and current context in which people operate. Narrative inquiry is a methodology that validates and recognises the experiences of people by telling and retelling the participants' stories. A researcher who takes on a narrative inquiry needs to be interested and take these stories and experiences seriously. Narrative inquiry is used to understand how people make sense and meaning of experiences for themselves (Henning , van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004; Fricker, 2007; Terre Blanche, Kelly, & Durrheim, 2012) and can also be used to study experiences in various educational settings (Mertova & Webster, 2007; Clandinin, 2013).

Narrative inquiry supports an understanding that people live their experiences and can relive these experiences through telling stories in context, in place, and in time. This suggests that experiences are historical and influenced by society, culture, and context. It is essential, therefore, especially during the data collection phase, to consider that people's experiences do not emerge in a chronological order or in a straight-forward manner. Taking on a narrative inquiry can be a daunting task because there are implications for how data is collected, how it might be grouped, organised, and analysed, and more importantly, how a researcher can finally tell the stories of the people they are researching. As (Samuel, 2015:18) explains it is a mistake to think that the researcher imposes her worldview onto the lived experiences of the participants because the act of constructing the narrative is "collaboratively and analytically constructed". Therefore, an important aspect of a narrative inquiry is reaching an understanding of people's experiences.

In this understanding, Clandinin (2013) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that the design of a study that adopts narrative inquiry needs to pay attention to the three dimensions of narrative inquiry which are: temporality, place, and sociality. These dimensions are closely interlinked with, connect to, and resemble the directions of narrative inquiry. These directions are backward-forward and inward-outward directions. The three dimensions will be discussed with reference to the connecting or the interlinking directions of a narrative inquiry. I will also show how these dimensions and directions helped me to plan data collection as shown in Section 3.7.

Back and forth, in and out, and in-between space and time: Narrative inquiry dimensions

<div align="center">

For life's journey itself never ends

Once you have reached the end of each road

Uplifting off your entire cloggy load

Be it in a hot summer or a winter's cold

Behold! A new journey will unfold.

Lovina Sylvia Chidi

</div>

The notions of dimensions and directions in a narrative inquiry paint a picture of the complexity of people's stories and experiences. These dimensions and directions then make up the responsibilities and principles that a researcher needs to have when they take on a narrative inquiry. These principles can help the researcher with the process of data collection, data analysis, and ethical processes. The principles of a narrative inquiry also help the researcher to give attention to the time, place, and spaces where participants' experiences emerged. All this is discussed in the following sections where I show how I followed the principles of narrative inquiry, how I designed this study into a narrative inquiry, and how to some extent, I personalised this study with regards to my participants and myself.

The dimension of temporality

People's experiences emerge in an unordered and unstructured way as people tell and retell their stories and relive their experiences in various contexts and spaces. Studying people's experiences can be a daunting task and Clandinin (2013) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) advise that researchers who design a narrative inquiry, need to pay attention to the dimension of temporality and the directions that narratives of experiences often take. The dimension of temporality suggests that people's experiences are shaped by past experiences, experiences that occur in the present where new experiences emerge, and experiences that also have an imagined future. The backward and forward directions that experiences take suggests that experiences are not ordered; experiences are unstructured and often overlap and flow back and forth into each other.

Experiences, however, are "not an abstraction but a particularity in a life" (Clandinin, 2013:38) which means that a researcher in a narrative inquiry can focus on particular experiences that capture their interest. Although a researcher needs to focus on particular experiences relevant to the phenomenon under study, they also need to be less controlling than might be usual in data collection processes and allow experiences to flow in these back and forward directions. The researcher tracks the experiences

they are interested in, in the midst of other experiences which cannot be ignored. These experiences can give a rich context and background to the particular experiences which a researcher wants to analyse. Temporality and the directions of experiences are important in a narrative inquiry because a researcher can understand people's lived experiences, trace, track, and place experiences in a continuum as the future is imagined the figure below shows. A researcher can use these related experiences, get closer to the whole picture, and construct the participants' narratives. This study tried to demonstrate the dimension of temporality in the various stories of participants in the findings and discussion chapters.
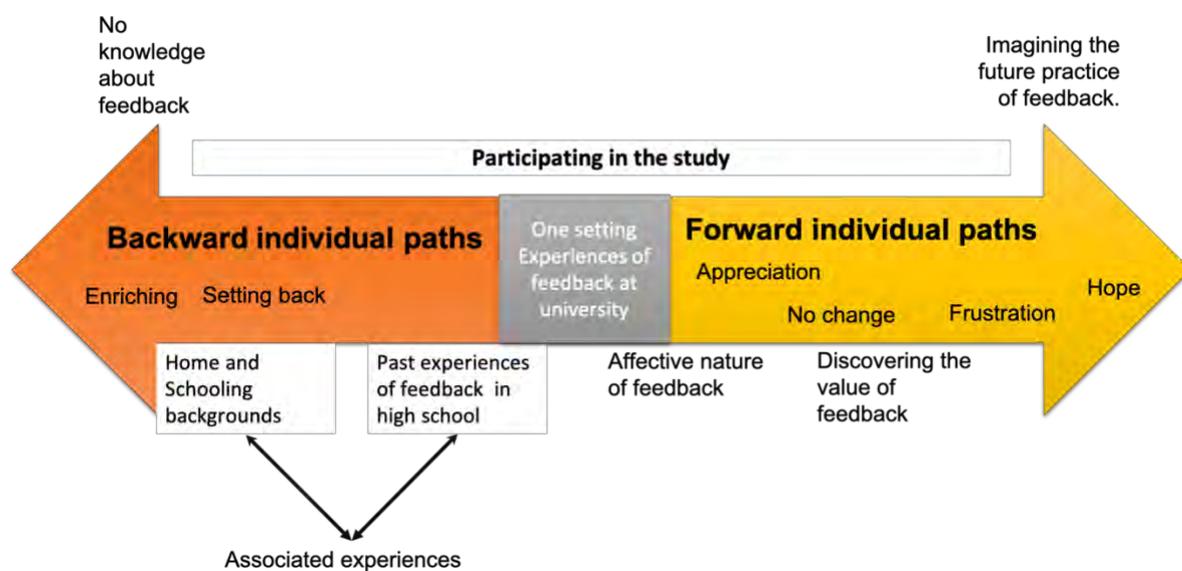
Figure 11: Temporality in study narratives

This study gave participants a chance to think back on their experiences of feedback while they were still in high school. Participants also examined their experiences of feedback while they were studying to become teachers at university, and also imagined giving feedback when they would be qualified and practising educators. Bumblebee, as her story will show, was exposed to enriching feedback in high school. However, she was concerned about how feedback at university would influence her practice of feedback when she was a qualified and practising educator. Lande and Kgase expressed how much this study opened their eyes to feedback and how important feedback was to their learning at university. Kgase felt that as participants in this study, they had more advantages compared to their classmates who would likely never experience feedback in the ways that they did. Lande was beginning to be aware of feedback and how she could possibly use it in a more effective way during the times when she went for teaching practice. The actual data collection process thus also

demonstrated the dimension of temporality and the backward and forward directions of experiences – as participants' experiences of feedback kept on moving back as they were reflecting on their experiences of feedback at university through their engagement with this project and then looked forward to how these experiences would shape their future feedback practices.

Data can be grouped or organised according to a particular time frame to track and identify the backward and forward directions and can be organised in chronological order or according to how the different time frames relate to each other as time passed. This study, however, as discussed later only used the dimension of temporality to structure the process of data collection and kept the back and forth direction in mind. This also helped to structure the stories of participants in chronological order (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The dimension of place and context

Clandinin (2013) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that the second dimension that narrative inquiry researchers need to pay attention to is the dimension of place. The dimension of place refers to the specific geographical places that shaped the experiences of people, including the researcher. The dimension of space is closely linked to contexts in which studies take place. Since experiences are temporal, experiences might not necessarily take place in one particular place. Experiences, as mentioned earlier, are always in transit and place plays a role in shaping participants. A narrative inquiry is also a study where a researcher 'lives' alongside their participants to capture or witness how the experiences of people unfold in various places and various contexts.

As previously indicated, this study only focused and analysed participants' experiences of feedback while the participants were studying at university. The study used related and past experiences of the participants while they were in high school. Past experiences assisted me to consider participants' other places and various contexts to better understand their stories.

Marsha's story, for instance, shows how the dimension of space was considered in this study. When Marsha was still in primary school, she attended English classes on Fridays at a 'white school' so that she could learn how to speak English. Marsha was a learner at her local township high school and faced many challenges at school. Like other participants, she operated in different bounded geographical places in different contexts and these shaped her experiences of feedback.

When the participants came to university to learn to become teachers, they came from different places with different social and schooling backgrounds which intersected when they got to university. Their experiences of feedback were different as their stories will show. Their spaces intersected, their experiences intersected, and this study enabled them to think and reflect on their experiences in a

bounded specific place at the university (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

The dimension of sociality: An inward and outward direction

The third dimension that Clandinin (2013) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) encourage researchers who adopt narrative inquiry to pay attention to is the dimension of sociality. The dimension of sociality is concerned with people's social and personal circumstances in which their experiences unfold. Personal conditions refer to emotional and affective experiences, hopes, dreams, and desires that the researchers and participants have in a particular time, space, and context. The dimension of sociality then associates with the inward and outward directions. When the researcher and participants' experiences take an inward detour, this means they connect with their emotional and affective experiences. When experiences go outward the researcher and participants connect with their hopes, dreams, and desires.

In this study, participants' emotional and affective experiences most strongly emerged when we had individual conversations about experiences of feedback in high school and at university. On the one hand, participants indicated that feedback frustrated them and rendered them helpless. On the other hand, this study somehow elevated the hopes and dreams of participants. Bumblebee, Lande, Bourney, Kgase, and Marsha demonstrated, to some extent, hope about feedback and their participation in this study prepared them for their own practices of giving feedback.

Taking on a Narrative Inquiry: Researcher Responsibilities

A narrative research design resembles other qualitative studies, however, there are some specific methodologic considerations such as that participants "enter the inquiry field in the midst of living their stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 63-64). The participants' experiences do not begin when research comes their way and they continue with these experiences naturally long after the research has ended. A narrative inquiry allows a researcher and their participants to go back into the past, consider current experiences, and look into the future to make sense and give meaning to these experiences. The researcher then draws on theories of the phenomenon – in this case feedback – to make sense of their experiences (Mouton, 2012). In this understanding, this study leaned more towards an interpretive perspective because "interpretive research suit(s) those who care about meanings people attach" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2012:9).

A narrative inquiry is about having relationships that are caring and also empowering for the researcher, participants, and their practice. Participants come with many stories and the researcher needs to continually pay attention and navigate participants' experiences with care. I had to be

mindful of Samuel's reminder (2015: 17) not to "glamourise the subject's worldview of positionality" because my participants may well infuse their reflections on their past with "nostalgia and celebratory self-glorification."

As I was having conversations with participants about feedback, I was always aware of my position as a professional – that I was an adult with more knowledge and experience in the field of teaching and higher education than the participants. I understood that, even though I was not part of the particular university where the participants were learning to become teachers, I carried a responsibility through the course of this study to recognise and acknowledge their participation as they were taking on the academic literacies of teaching practice.

This study probably gave participants a much-needed space to reflect on feedback experiences freely without fear or doubt, and in ways that enabled them to visualise what feedback was and what it meant for their studies. A narrative inquiry is beneficial for both the researcher and participants because it enables both to recognise each other as people first, and as people who share similar interests and almost similar experiences – I was a teacher and was interested in feedback, therefore, this study came full circle. It was important for participants to recognise me as a person who was interested in them as people, their stories, and their experiences of feedback. Having said that, I understood that I could not give students advice nor offer specific opinions on their experiences of feedback at university in any way that might compromise their relationships with their lecturers. I was also conscious that I needed to keep my focus on the purpose of the study to protect me from losing sight of the inquiry (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Clandinin & Connely, 2000).

The relationships with the participants enabled me "to be attentive to my own unfolding, enfolding, storied life" (Clandinin, 2013: 23). I shared some of my personal experiences and the participants got to know me as a teacher and that I love to teach. I wanted to be a lawyer, but I could not realise my dream because my mother wanted me to be a teacher. I turned out to be the teacher that I am and my mother, may the Lord rest her soul, was not wrong to send me to a teacher's college after all. It was during these conversations that I found out that all the participants wanted to be teachers from a young age and shared with me some of their personal stories, as shown in the various chapters of data findings and discussions.

My positionality

My positionality in this study was shaped by my interest in feedback as a pedagogic practice while I was working at the University of Johannesburg. Taking on a narrative study enabled me to reflect and tell some of my stories that centred around feedback. More importantly, Miranda Fricker's theory of

epistemic injustice and Nancy Fraser's principle of parity of participation motivated me to take on research that would enable me to study participants' experiences of feedback as they participated as novice teachers at university. Secondly, this study gave me a chance to ascertain if feedback demonstrated the norm of parity of participation. Since this study is a narrative inquiry, it is necessary to begin by telling my story as part of my reflection on issues of positionality.

One of my most memorable, exciting, and formative experiences of feedback happened when I was in Standard Five (Grade 7) at St Peter's Catholic school. I loved reading, and because of this I could explain the meaning of words and work out contextual meanings. My classmates named me "a walking dictionary" and my teacher, whom we called Mistress Margaret, used to comment that "English is difficult, and England is very far". I did not know that this was feedback then; however, I understood the meaning of her comment was that the only way to understand English words was to read English books. England was too far away for us to go there and ask the English people the meaning of an English word.

My next significant memory of feedback experiences was almost paralysing. It happened many years later when I was a schoolteacher. I had registered for an Honours degree in education at one of the universities in South Africa. In one of the research methodology lectures, we learnt about using observation as a data collection method. The lecturer, a well-recognised professor, asked me to describe what she looked like. She was a White woman with brunette hair, and I described her in the best way I could and included that she was a well-known researcher. The description I gave seemingly did not satisfy the professor when she commented that my description of her was "naïve". My classmates and colleagues burst out with laughter, and as a mature and responsible woman sitting among a roomful of laughing young people, I felt embarrassed. The experience of that feedback left an indelible mark. I did not know what was wrong with the observation I gave, but I still remember the negative feeling it invoked inside as I felt humiliated in front of the class.

Another similar experience of feedback took place when I was in my late forties. At the time I had left the teaching profession, and had acquired a master's degree in education and wished to pursue a PhD research study. I approached an NRF-rated researcher and professor to request if he could supervise my study. I asked for a meeting with him to present my research topic on feedback practice. His response was, "You are not ready for a PhD. Your topic will not even make it to a paper. Come back when you are ready". I was shattered, and I was again embarrassed by the feedback. Although this experience knocked me emotionally for some time, I eventually turned it into something useful. I contributed a book chapter about this particular experience of feedback, and it was one of the

impetuses for this PhD study (see Vilakazi, 2016). All of us "experience the influence of feedback in our lives and in our work" (Boud & Molloy, 2013: 1).

I learnt on that same day after I had spoken with the professor, that Rhodes University was offering a PhD programme. This programme includes "Doc week" which takes place three times each year. According to the website, I found that the "Doc week" offers targeted scholarly workshops to expose PhD scholars to various approaches as they take their PhD journeys and to the opportunity of engaging in the doctorate within a community. One of my friends referred me to Professor Sioux McKenna, who was the coordinator of the Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) PhD programme at Rhodes University at that time. I nervously sent her an email, in which I explained that I wished to pursue a PhD; I wanted to study feedback in the field of higher education. Sioux replied to my email and confirmed that my topic would indeed be suitable for a PhD study and attached a whole lot of readings on feedback for me to consider. I never looked back.

Even though it has taken me longer to complete my PhD than I might have liked, as you read this study, I will have satisfied all the requirements that are needed for a PhD study, other than the final examination. Many of my findings are similar to the ones that are reported in the literature but I have learnt enormously from my participants' experiences of feedback. I also hope that this study has contributed much to the conversation on feedback, to the field of higher education pedagogic practice of feedback in the context of social justice, and the nuanced, often unnoticed, epistemic injustices that feedback can perpetrate. These personal and theoretical motivations remained central to my engagement with my study and also underpinned the methodological decisions I describe in this chapter.

My more practical motivation for the study originated from the time when I was working as an instructional designer at a university in South Africa. One of my responsibilities was to support lecturers' online teaching and assessment practices. My role as an instructional designer turned into a technical role as I trained the lecturers on how to use the various online tools of the learning management system. Although I tried to apply theories that I had read that underpinned online teaching and learning, my input was not convincing for the lecturers. I was positioned by them as a mere 'techie' who only showed them where to click. The lecturers could not imagine that I too studied theories and that I could use them to understand sound practices. I gave up and resigned myself to a 'techie' positioning and my work became 'show and tell'.

I was also expected to fix system errors which I could not because I did not have the sophisticated behind the scenes technical skills. In the long run, my 'techie' work soon became routine, and I could not find satisfaction in my work as I was not interested in working with the technology behind the

scenes, I was interested in the educational aspects. I was a happy front-end user of technology. I left the 'techie' job when I landed an opportunity which enabled me to work in academic support and development where feedback plays a significant role in developing learning materials. From these personal experiences, I developed a desire to undertake a PhD in higher education studies. These motivations also spurred my commitment to a study that was underpinned by social justice concerns focusing on epistemic injustices that might unknowingly occur in the practices of feedback (Fricker, 2007; Pohlhaus, 2017).

This study, as outlined in previous chapters, was informed by occurrences of epistemic injustice that might unknowingly emanate from feedback. Occurrences of epistemic injustice have the potential to prevent the social justice agenda a university tries to follow. This concern motivated me to adopt a narrative inquiry as this study's research methodology. The narrative inquiry approach was appropriate because it offered reflective mechanisms that can be used to critique tradition, to drive transformation, and change practices that encourage epistemic injustice (Nussbaum, 1997; Fricker, 2007; Lange, 2014; Shay & Mkhize, 2018).

Sampling

When you want something,
The entire universe
Conspires in helping
You to achieve it

Coelho, 2012:92

A narrative inquiry allows a researcher to use sampling strategies that are common in any qualitative study. I relied on the network at Rhodes University that was made available to. My sampling strategy then started off as an opportunistic sampling strategy (Squire, 2013). I sent emails to my network at the Education Department at Rhodes University. The purpose of the email was to request them to give me permission and time to present my study to undergraduate students. I provided them with a copy of the gatekeeper's letter from the Registrar at Rhodes University which included my supervisor's contact details.

I travelled to Rhodes University from Gauteng and managed to present my study to two groups of students at the Faculty of Education. The purpose of my presentation was to inform participants about what my study entailed. I handed out invitation letters and consent forms, and then began with my

presentation to one group of first-year students and to another group of second-year students. I explained the rationale of my study, the research question, the aim of the study, the data gathering process, the contribution of my study, and how students who were going to participate in this study would benefit from it. I chose to make these presentations so that I could interact directly with the students, make connections, and begin to negotiate ethical relationships. It was important to me that the potential participants could meet me in person to hear about the research in detail and make informed decisions about participating in my study. The most compelling reason for students to want to be part of this study was that it focused on their experiences of feedback (Kelly, 2012; Clandinin, 2013).

The consent forms were attached to the invitation letters where I included my contact details and the contact details of my supervisor. After the presentations, I waited outside for students to possibly give their consent. I needed to do this because the participants and I would not always be available for conversations because of our study obligations and living spaces. I live in Roodepoort, one of the towns in Gauteng province and the distance between my home and Makhanda where Rhodes university is located, is approximately 1 000 km as the map shows below. I could only have conversations with participants when I attended Doc-weeks that were held for Doctoral scholars at Rhodes University.

Figure 12: From Roodepoort to Makhanda

The number of participants that I had settled for initially was 10 students who were studying to become teachers at the Faculty of Education at Rhodes University. The number of students who

showed interest in my study was more than 20. These students signed and returned the consent forms to me. I created two closed WhatsApp groups. One WhatsApp group was for the first-year students and the other WhatsApp group was for the second-year students. The purpose of the WhatsApp groups was to arrange for meeting times and venues where we could have the first group conversation. Some students did not confirm their availability and some students left the group, which indicated to me that they were dropping out of the study. There was no ill feeling in this regard, I understood that some of their initial enthusiasm might wane when they realised that I was hoping to really spend time with them. It was clear that some of them could not meet with me because of time constraints. It was clear within a few weeks that only five would remain in the study. A narrative inquiry requires a great deal of trust between researchers and participants (Clandinin, 2013) and I spent some time ensuring that my participants understood that I took their well-being seriously and that I was interested in them personally and not just as objects of study. The participants selected their own pseudonyms and this was part of my attempt to ensure that they had a sense of ownership of their experiences.

My sampling strategy then demonstrated to a certain extent a stratified purposive sampling (Durrheim & Painter, 2006; Maree & Piertersen, 2012). A stratified sampling purposive strategy supported my decision on the criteria and the number of participants that would enable me to support my research design. The purposive sampling strategy also matched my research question, which as stated in Chapter One was how experiences of feedback enable students (who, in the case of this study, are learning to become teachers) to gain epistemic access. A narrative inquiry, like other qualitative studies, allows for a small sample size. This allowed me to study participants' experiences of feedback in-depth, in a single context of the university where the students were learning to become teachers (Merriam , 1998; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Lindegger, 2012; Maree & Piertersen, 2012).

While many students indicated their interest in being participants in my study and agreed in principle, the narrowing down process of sampling took place organically. A narrative inquiry is clear in its focus and context, that participants' lived experiences would affect their current ones and social structures such as racism and sexism would play out consciously or unconsciously in the experiences participants shared with me. However, as I did not plan to provide generalisable conclusions about the role of race or gender on feedback, I elected not to use those as my sampling criteria. The five participants who signed the consent forms and remained in the study until I completed the data collection phase, happened to all be young, Black female students. Maybe my identity as an older black woman played a role in this process. When the study began, Bourney and Kgase were in their first year of study and Bumblebee, Lande, and Marsha in their second year of study.

Data Gathering Through Conversations

Gathering data in a narrative inquiry is not always an easy task. The particular experiences a researcher wants to study are always woven into other experiences; there are often distractions and meandering directions and sometimes disconnected experiences and stories. Paying attention to the dimensions of temporality, space, and sociality enabled me to structure the process of data gathering because "a sequential ordering is considered as a fundamental criterion of a narrative. A sequence imposes a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected" (Nieuwehuis, 2007; Loots, Coppens & Sermijn, 2013:109).

Narrative conversations need to be mutually respectful and authentic. Conversations should allow the researcher to care for the participants in ways that do not objectify them and treat them as subjects whose roles yield data. Participants, as human beings, are interested in conversation and having committed to the study, all five participants were generous in sharing their lived experiences with me. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with my participants and was able through listening to their stories to construct participant narratives (Squire, 2013). All the conversations took place at the Rhodes University campus and nearby places, outside the university. I remain in contact with the participants but have only used data collected between 2017 and 2019.

Conversations with Participants

In the first conversation we considered the dimension of temporality and focused on participants' experiences of feedback at university. As we were having this conversation, I paid attention to the directions of feedback experiences as participants moved from their past experiences to their experiences at university. The university represented the dimension of place and the context where experiences of feedback unfolded. In terms of the directions of narrative inquiry, the conversations took mostly inward directions.

The purpose of the first group conversations was to strengthen the relationships that I had already established with the participants during the sampling phase, which I discussed earlier. Secondly the purpose of the first group conversations with the participants was to establish how participants understood and experienced feedback. I had the first group conversation with Marsha, Lande, and Bumblebee on 11th of July 2017. Marsha, Lande, and Bumblebee were at that time in their second year of study at Rhodes University where they were studying to become teachers. They were sharing a rented house which was approximately 1. 2 kilometres from Rhodes University. We met at this house which was within walking distance from where I stayed whenever I came to Rhodes University. On the same day of 11 July, I also had a first separate group conversation with Kgase and Bourney. Kgase

and Bourney were at that time in their first year of study. They stayed in one of the residences on campus where I met them for their first conversation. The question that initiated the conversation was "How do you understand feedback?" In that same week of 11 July, I held individual conversations with each participant. Figure 12 is a visual representation of group and individual conversations in July and October 2017.
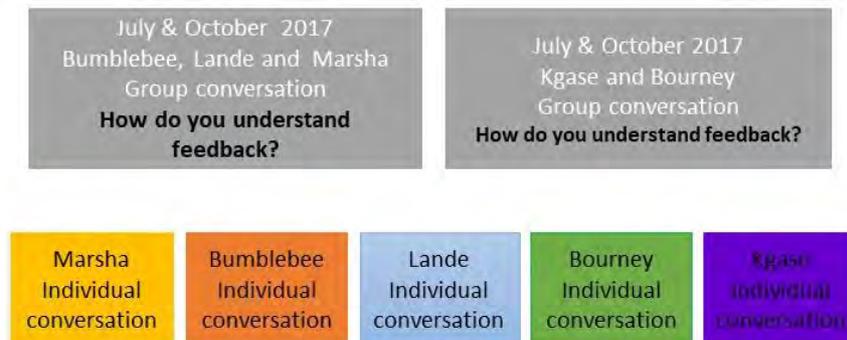
Figure 13: Group and individual initial conversations July and October 2017

The Paths of Individual Conversations

Since I needed to study participants' experiences of feedback closely, the participants and I agreed that I would have individual conversations with them. The purpose of these individual conversations with participants was to enable me to pay close attention to the dimension of temporality which I used to structure the process of data collection. Within this dimension, each participant reflected on their experiences of feedback when they were in high school, their experiences of feedback at university, and how they imagined their feedback practices when they would be qualified and practicing teachers. These reflections enabled me to understand how participants might have transferred their understanding of feedback from high school to their learning at university. The dimension of temporality in particular, helped me to track and write the participants' stories holistically, where I could demonstrate the complexities and the richness of their social and cultural lives about feedback in a university setting (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Bell, 2002; Webster & Mertova, 2007; Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The figure below shows the path that I followed with regard to the initial individual conversations to collect data.
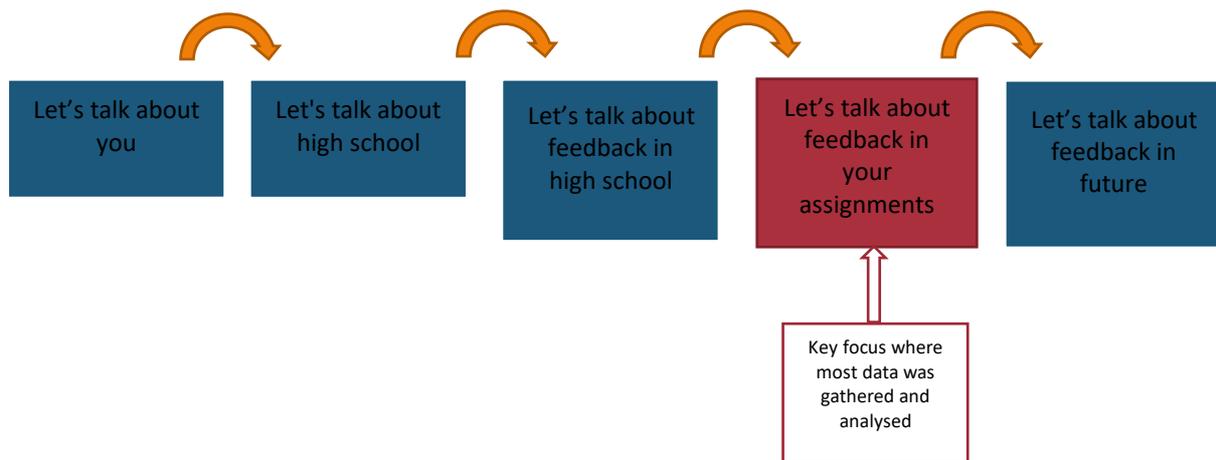
Figure 14: The path of initial individual conversations

Individual conversations also enabled me to pay attention to the dimensions of space(s) and contexts in which each participant operated. As their stories show, participants came from very different family, schooling, and socio-economic backgrounds. However, participants' spaces and contexts intersected when they started studying at the university and began living near it. Their experiences of feedback intersected within one singular context – the education department at the university. The figure below entails a sum total of group and individual conversations I had with participants in the week of March 2017.

Subsequent group and individual conversations that followed in 2018 and 2019 took a similar format as shown in this figure. At this time the purpose of group conversations was to determine if the understanding and how participants experienced feedback had changed or remained the same. Kgase was the one participant who indicated a change in her understanding and the role that feedback could play in her learning.   Individual conversations included reflections in more detail on specific feedback that participants had recently received.

Individual conversations in particular allowed us to discuss feedback that each participant got on the various assignments that they made available for this study. The participants and I reflected on the feedback together. I needed to understand their experiences of feedback from their personal points of view within this one singular context. There were instances where participants' experiences took an inward detour. These directions possibly exposed unintended power differentials and how feedback could paralyse their learning. The outward and forward detour showed how receiving feedback could shape their own practices of feedback (Mertova & Webster, 2007; Phoenix, 2013). For example, and as I will show later, Bumblebee was concerned about repeating unhelpful feedback practices that she was experiencing at the time, Lande and Kgase particularly demonstrated a more

forward-looking approach – an encouraging imagined future of their practices of feedback. Figure 14 is a representation of the sum total of Group and Individual conversations that took place from 2017 to 2019.

Date	Group Conversation	Group Conversation	Bumblebee	Lande	Marsha	Kgase	Bourney
2017 Jul	Kgase, Bourney	Bumblebee, Lande, Marsha	y	y	y	y	y
2017 Oct	Kgase, Bourney	Bumblebee, Lande, Marsha	y	y	y	y	y
2018 Mar	Kgase, Bourney	Bumblebee, Lande, Marsha	y	y	y	y	y
2018 Oct	Kgase, Bourney	Bumblebee, Lande, Marsha	y	y		y	y
2019 Jul	Kgase, Bourney	Bumblebee, Lande	y	y		y	y
2019 Oct	Kgase, Bourney		y	y		y	y
Total	6	5	6	6	3	6	6

Figure 15: Group and Individual conversations 2017 - 2019

These shared deliberations brought the participants into my study and to some extent made them my research partners. This study was not only mine; it was the participants' as well. It was important that I brought them to life. I wanted them to see themselves and the vital role they played in helping me to answer the research question of this study and contributing to what this study turned out to be (Phoenix, 2013; Squire, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007). I wrote a short poem "Teacher to teacher" in recognition of Kgase, Bourney, Bumblebee, Marsha, and Lande for their willingness to help me to understand their experiences of feedback.

Teacher to teacher
Help me to understand and as you understand too
Bring me into your space as this space can be mine too
Hold me in your hand and I will forever be grateful to you.

The experiences of feedback that participants shared with me enabled me to understand their experiences more clearly through the theoretical lenses this study adopted. These theoretical lenses, Nancy Fraser's principle of parity of participation and Miranda Fricker's theory of epistemic injustice were discussed in Chapter Two.

The Process of Analysing Data

Transcribing

I decided at the onset of this study that I was going to transcribe all the conversations that I recorded myself. I transcribed every word and every sentence that the participants expressed in all the conversations. The process of typing the transcripts was repetitious and needed patience and close attention to detail. Transcribing the data was beneficial because it brought me closer to the data by reading and re-reading the copious data. I could 'see' the body language of the participants and pick up nuances and non-verbal cues as I was transcribing data. Although I had to confirm with the data many times, the closeness I had to the data enabled me to identify with participants and to immediately remember who said what. I could hear the participants' voices as I was transcribing data. Transcribing the data myself also strengthened how I related to the individual participants; it felt like I took them home with me and everywhere I went.

Reading the transcripts repeatedly as I was transcribing enabled me to learn from the data until patterns and categories began to emerge. The process of transcribing data myself was beneficial because I could begin to assign codes as I was making transcriptions (Clandinin & Connely, 2000). The codes, however, were not final until all the data was transcribed. Although I planned my data collection process in line with the dimension of temporality, transcribing data also helped me identify the past and the present and their imagined experiences that were scattered throughout the transcripts. I also assigned codes according to the dimension of temporality.

Coding

Analysing lived experiences in a narrative inquiry is problematic because human experiences are many and show up in unstructured and disorderly ways. Importantly, people's narratives about their experiences will only ever be partial accounts of the events as they occurred. As an interpretative study, an additional problem arises which is known as the "double hermeneutic" (as discussed in Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Not only is the data a partial representation in that it is the students' interpretation of their experiences, my role as a researcher is to interpret this interpretation. This has significant implications for the kinds of claims I can make and the validity with which my claims can be considered.

As discussed earlier, I structured conversations to resemble the dimensions of temporality, space, and sociality. Coding is a process of collecting important and meaningful data from transcripts, and the researcher needs to be willing to read the transcripts line by line, word for word, carefully, mindfully, and repeatedly. Although the process of coding initially and intuitively takes place when data is

transcribed, coding enabled me to identify, mark, or label significant words and sentences of segments in the transcript. This "soft eyes" approach, whereby the researcher begins to understand how the participants have experienced the phenomena before the theory is carefully applied to make sense of it, was followed by me grouping the codes into assigned unique descriptions. This process then led to bringing the data closer in order to see through theoretical l lenses that I described in Chapter Two.

I initially used Atlasti. to manage the coding and to group the codes into categories and develop themes. Unfortunately, my version of Atlasti. crashed, and I could not retrieve all the data that I organised. I resorted to coding each transcript by hand and used colours to code data.

A researcher who pursues a narrative inquiry needs to clarify at what point data coding is going to start and where it needs to end. I decided from the onset that I was going to analyse experiences of feedback of participants while they were at university. However, my transcripts showed that I collected data from participants' past experiences of feedback to their experiences of feedback at university, and there were also indications of how they imagined their future practices of feedback. Human experiences are complicated; they are many and all are important and cannot be controlled. The only control I had was the research question that I needed to answer, the analytical lenses, and defining a starting point and an endpoint. In addition to this, I paid attention to the dimensions and the directions of narrative inquiry. All these helped me to stay on course (Squires, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2013).

As issues emerged, I developed a list of codes to help me to identify issues that were emerging from the experiences the participants shared with me. I included a data code to exemplify the particular code to clarify for myself what this code 'looked like' in the data. Various iterations of this table allowed me to consider which theoretical lenses from Fricker and Fraser would be most generative in making sense of the data.

The participants did not only become part of this study to give me data, they also contributed much to the preliminary analysis of their experiences of feedback, after which I used the theoretical lenses that I described in Chapter Two. I hope, moving beyond this study, the participants will use the feedback insights they gained when they are practising teachers. Narrative inquiry, as Clandinin (2013: 51) explains is a research study that can be "helpful to the participants both in and following the research". Participants informed me that my study benefited them in many ways. As their stories show, their understanding of feedback was deepening as they were carefully trying to gain epistemic access and make sense and meaning of the norms of the knowledge they needed to know as they were learning to become teachers.

Ethical Considerations in Narrative Inquiry

Ethical considerations were addressed in a number of ways. On a practical level, I followed the institutional process of ethical clearance. Firstly, my proposal was accepted on 7 December 2015 by the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee. The letter of approval stated that "In the event that the proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes, the approval of the proposal by the committee constitutes ethical clearance. This was the case with this proposal and the committee thus approved ethical clearance". The Ethical Clearance number was 2015.10.3 (see Appendix A). Secondly I wrote a letter to the registrar for permission to collect data from students at the Faculty of Education at Rhodes University (see Appendix B). Thirdly, I wrote an invitation letter to students and invited them to be participants in my study. The invitation letter explained what my research study was about and how they were going to participate in the study (see Appendix C). The consent form was attached to the invitation letter (see Appendix D). The data collection process started after the participants returned the signed consent form and I began with the process of data collection. Thirdly, the participants were given an option to choose their pseudonyms to protect their identity and anonymity. Embedded in these practical steps were concerns about the wellbeing of my participants and reflections on how I moved from their data to their narrative vignettes to the theoretical lenses used in the analysis. In all of this, I needed to foreground authenticity and trustworthiness. This is not only about being authentic and trustworthy to my participants, it is also about being authentic and trustworthy to my readers. I have endeavoured to be true to the theory and to my participants' stories and to present verbatim data quotes to illustrate the claims I make in the next chapters in order to fulfil this responsibility.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlines the research methodology of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry was suitable for this study because it enabled me to study experiences of feedback of the five participants while allowing them to participate in analysing their experiences of feedback. Narrative inquiry allowed participants to make sense of their past experiences of feedback while the participants were still in high school. Narrative inquiry also allowed them to understand what influenced their understanding of feedback at university and imagine how they might practise feedback when they will be practising educators. Narrative inquiry on my part enabled me to revisit how I can give meaningful feedback in my own practice as I support academics in developing study material. This chapter also influenced me to think of strategies that could contribute to developing feedback literacies as discussed in Chapter Three.

I now move on to present my three findings chapters, beginning with Bumblebee's story. The narrative vignettes of the five participants are presented within the three findings chapters at points most appropriate to the discussion. Between these vignettes, I build claims about the nature of feedback based on the data from all five participants.

Chapter Five - "If you don't respect what I know, then whatever I wrote is bullshit"

We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teacher, leave them kids alone

'Another Brick in the Wall'
By Pink Floyd
From the Album *The Wall* (1979)

Bumblebee's Story

Bumblebee is a young Xhosa woman from the Eastern Cape who is studying to become a foundation phase teacher. She is a vibrant and colourful character. She speaks with passion and has a love of life. Bumblebee is very close to her mother, Noluyolo, who is also a foundation phase teacher. Bumblebee knew from a young age that she too wanted to have the rewards of an education. Noluyolo raised Bumblebee singlehandedly in a predominantly 'Coloured'[15] area. Bumblebee spent most of her formative years with Coloured people and speaks Afrikaans very well. Noluyolo has for many years been a teacher at a local township[16] government school, but she enrolled Bumblebee in a school in the Coloured area because she did not believe that Bumblebee would get a good education at the school where she taught as she did not trust the capabilities of the teachers. According to Bumblebee, her mother says that the teachers were ageing and their knowledge of teaching practices were not up to the standards she expected. Government township schools typically do not have adequate resources (Bloch, 2009), and Noluyolo was concerned that Bumblebee would not get the care she deemed necessary. When Bumblebee was ready for her intermediate phase schooling, Noluyolo enrolled her in a private and very privileged school, which Bumblebee referred to as a 'White school'. Noluyolo wanted Bumblebee to have a better education and access to the privileges which she had

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[15] 'Coloured' people are multiracial, ethnic, and native South Africans and live mostly in the Western Cape. They are descendants of the Khoisan, Black African, and European people. 'Coloured' was one of the racial groupings that emerged during the racial segregation that took place during the apartheid population registration act of 1950. This act ceased to exist in 1991. Coloured people during the apartheid era were racially marginalised and suffered many forms of injustice and racial stereotyping (Butler, 2009; Reilly, 2016). The term 'Coloured' continues to be used in post-Apartheid South Africa with some people reclaiming this designation and others indicating that it is derogatory and using the term 'mixed-race' instead.

[16] 'Township' is a South African term for residential semi-urban areas that were intentionally under-resourced and were designated for various marginalised population groups under apartheid and which continue to represent that demographic today.

not enjoyed. Noluyolo had received a 'Bantu education'[17] which did not give her access to the kinds of education she wanted for her daughter. The sacrifices Noluyolo made to pay for Bumblebee's schooling on her teacher's salary were deemed worthwhile.

At this 'White school', English was the medium of instruction. To Noluyolo's delight, the teachers were young, energetic, and knowledgeable. Bumblebee was the only Black pupil, and her English was not as good as her Afrikaans. Bumblebee told the story of how the girls at her new school battled to pronounce her isiXhosa name, and so they abbreviated it to the English nickname "Bumblebee". Bumblebee was happy to have an English name and did not mind at the time; instead, she saw her name as a sign of inclusion and acceptance. The teachers supported Bumblebee, and she gradually developed her use of the English language. "I completed my foundation phase there, and I was speaking Afrikaans and English". Bumblebee earned a label among her isiXhosa speaking friends – they called her a 'coconut'[18]. She explained: "I struggle to this day with my isiXhosa language because I am more used to English and Afrikaans". Towards the end of the study as I was doing member checking I returned to this issue and asked Bumblebee how she felt about being called a coconut. Upon reflection Bumblebee said being called a coconut made her a 'bigger person' because her friends often asked her to help them with their English school work.

After completing her intermediate phase education, Noluyolo changed Bumblebee's schooling once again by enrolling her in a small private home-school system where Bumblebee completed her matric. Noluyolo desired to see her only child receive the best education possible. The home-school followed an American curriculum and included small private classes of up to 20 participants. Bumblebee had all the resources that she needed and a teacher who supported and assessed her work after each section of a particular subject. Bumblebee explained how she understood her work and her teacher gave her extensive and detailed written and verbal feedback. The feedback came in the form of problem-based questions that Bumblebee needed to answer independently with the help of her educational resources. The teacher highlighted areas of weakness and helped Bumblebee to work through them. Bumblebee used the feedback to re-write and revise her essays and, most of the time, the comments enabled Bumblebee to produce an improved version. The feedback also helped her to

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[17] Bantu Education was the system of education provided to Black South Africans under apartheid and was intentionally under-resourced, narrow in scope and instrumentalist in approach.

[18] The term coconut is used as a derogatory slur on someone who has black skin but takes on the 'ways of being' that may be deemed white.

solve problems with more insight. "I come from a perfect English school. English was like my first language. I come from a school like a Model C school".[19]

Bumblebee's school experience set her up with a high degree of feedback literacy. Bumblebee was exposed to feedback that enriched and supported the development of her learning. It would seem that Bumblebee would be well disposed to use feedback to make meaning of the significant new literacies related to teaching practice to which she was now being exposed at university. And so it was with some dismay that Bumblebee indicated that the feedback she received at university did not in fact help her to make meaning of the various concepts that were covered in the assignment tasks and she found the feedback at university to be cryptic and abrupt.

As will be the focus of this chapter, much of the feedback was seen to be directed at correcting surface-level errors, an issue experienced in different ways by all five participants.

Feedback Focuses on the Surface Level of Grammar

This study asked how feedback enabled the participants to gain epistemic access. As indicated in Chapter Three, for the participants to gain epistemic access, feedback needs to make the structure of the knowledge and the associated literacy practices explicit and transparent for participants. When these expectations are explicit, the participants can learn how to participate and make meaning through the various assignment tasks. The narratives of the participants showed, however, that the feedback they received often did not go much beyond the surface level of grammar. Bumblebee referred to this when she said:

> When I look at the comments box thingy, it will just say: 'Well done, however you need to work on your grammar. Fix your grammar'. All my assignments look at my grammar. Your grammar. Like everything is about grammar. Grammar is the only thing that I am criticised on. English is not my mother tongue.

Lande also experienced feedback as being focused on her grammar: "Here, he is correcting my grammar". Bumblebee concluded: "All that is important at university is grammar. Grammar is all essential. I feel like grammar is all important. But if you don't respect what I know then whatever I wrote is bullshit."

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[19] Model C schools were those formerly White schools which opened their doors to all races in the early 1990s. All schools in South Africa are now open to all races but the term 'Model C' remains colloquially in use to refer to previously advantaged schools (Bloch, 2009).

Feedback that only focused on participants' grammatical errors was frustrating for the participants. "I don't understand this … this grammar bullshit" said Bumblebee. Kgase asked: "Is it all about grammar?" This focus on the surface level of grammar demonstrates the dominance of the autonomous model discussed in Chapter Two. The autonomous model understands academic writing as being about mastering the technical skills of reading and writing "that range from simple grammatical encodings to complicated syntactical constructions" (Giroux, 1988: 56). The assumption is that with such skills, the participants can produce written texts that are free of grammatical errors and thereby they will have demonstrated academic competence (Boughey & McKenna, 2016). However, these participants have come to university as novices and the norms of academic practices are new and not transparent to them yet. Furthermore, the autonomous model presupposes that knowledge and academic endeavours are neutral skills and fails to consider that the participants are knowers in their own right, participating in academic and epistemic spaces in their capacity as knowers (Fricker, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a concern that the process of decolonising the curriculum ignores the transformation of pedagogic practices, such as feedback which can serve to encourage students in general through to developing competencies of thinking with critique. Critical thinking as discussed in Chapter Two enables students in general to see, perceive and understand beyond the content knowledge. Data shows that feedback that only focuses on surface levels of grammar demonstrates the autonomous model of texts and might not allow participants to think freely, critically and generate knowledge that could enrich their literacy practices (Zembylas, 2018). All this prevents participants from developing the much needed competencies to think freely with critique by bringing their knowledge and experiences into the epistemic space. The knowledge and cultural experiences that participants are having might be prevented from emerging, thus weakening the possibilities of parity of participation. Furthermore, the social status of participants and their chance to participate and contribute meaningfully might suffer from an injustice of status subordination. Participants, given a chance, can draw from their existing competencies to strengthen the practices they need to learn (Fricker, 2016). Feedback that operates in the autonomous model, however, has the potential to eclipse or hide the norms of academic literacies from participants as it treats the strange reading, writing and other practices as 'common sense'. Fricker (2016) points out that there are things that people need to know, because knowledge increases the horizons of knowing. If feedback focuses only on participant's incorrect grammar, it prevents participants from broadening their horizons of knowing and accessing the powerful knowledge of the curriculum.

Mastering English grammar and producing assignment texts that are free of grammatical errors was not seen by the participants to be enough to enable them to make sense of their courses and the expectations placed on them by their assignment tasks. The effort the participants put into trying to make sense of their studies and how they make meaning for themselves might be ignored through this focus on technical language correctness. Such feedback unfortunately does not give participants chances to make sense of new concepts and ideas to which the academy should provide access nor did it allow them to 'try on' the peculiar literacy practices required in their assignments. In this way, such forms of feedback can produce hermeneutic injustices by keeping participants outside of the 'goods of the curriculum'. It is for this reason that Kgase asked: "Is feedback about correcting my grammar or my understanding of the content?"

The practice of focusing on surface level correctness rather than meaning can also lead to a form of testimonial injustice, in that the participants are unable to share the knowledge and experiences they bring to the epistemic space of the university (Boughey, 2002). Academics in turn are also robbed of chances to know who the participants are and what they bring to the academic epistemic space.

The participants, as they take on new knowledge as manifested in the relevant academic literacies, can develop and "acquire new ways of knowing and making sense of the world, and themselves" (Sutton & Gill, 2010: 4). The participants can arguably best achieve this if feedback requires them to connect to literacies, knowledge, and experiences that the participants brought from their social and cultural practices outside of the academy (Gee, 1999; Street, 2003; Clarence & McKenna, 2017).

In contrast to this feedback that focused on language error correction, feedback that operates from within the ideological model is likely to demonstrate characteristics of dialogical feedback, which was in scant evidence in the data across all my conversations with the participants or their sharing of their marked assignments. Dialogical feedback enables participants to reflect and think about the actions they took to formulate a particular understanding or interpretation. Feedback becomes a dialogue through which the participants and academics negotiate this sense-making and meaning-making process constructively and collaboratively (Nicol, 2010). The participants had no real examples of dialogic feedback to share whereby they engaged with comments from academics to develop their meaning.

There were one or two examples, however, where feedback provided participants with an understanding of a particular word. For example, Lande's experience of feedback in the excerpt below shows her taking on a new vocabulary item thanks to feedback she received. In one of our conversations, Lande told me that the last time she opened an isiXhosa book was in 2013 when she completed her matric, and that she therefore felt quite distant from the language despite being an

isiXhosa speaker. She took a two-year gap before she entered university to take up her studies. Lande got feedback on one of her tasks where she had confused the meaning of isiXhosa traditional forms of singing.

> This is his feedback. He says it is ukombela. I said ebecula [singing in the continuous past tense]. Ukombela is more traditional way of saying it. When a person is standing up singing it is ukombela. It is an isiXhosa way of dancing and clapping. The proper word is ukombela. It was not ukucula but ukombela. I must know how to differentiate between ukucula not ukombela. [The feedback] increased my knowledge and I know the difference between ukucula and ukombela. I feel better. This feedback meant something to me because I was learning something new. (Lande)

This was one of the few examples from our conversations where a participant could specifically point to learning from the feedback, and this was simply in terms of a particular term and not dialogical. In this instance, Lande indeed gained epistemic access because the internal dialogues she had when she read the feedback suggest that feedback is providing access to terminology. Data show that Lande brought her own understanding and knowledge to the assignment task. The feedback that Lande got clearly came from expert knowledge. Such feedback creates conditions for the distribution of knowledge to take place. Academics are the ones who primarily give the participants feedback on their assignments as qualified experts within specific literacy practices. Academics participate in dialogical feedback where they give the participants a hearing, make the norms of literacy practices explicit, and facilitate the sense-making and meaning-making process (Boud & Molloy, 2012; 2013). Bourney seems to be calling out for such a dialogue when she said:

> Feedback is a guideline to me. It is a way forward. So, if I need information, guide me through it. If I am wrong, I need a response. The response says to me I did this wrong and my way forward is to use a different strategy.

It was evident across the data that the participants did not experience their feedback as dialogical. Drawing on Fricker (2007), academics can be positioned as 'hearers', they are good informants, and they have both rational authority and epistemic authority (Kotzee, 2017); an issue I return to later in this chapter and as discussed in Chapter Two of this study. Feedback has all the elements that potentially make it dialogical with a respectful hearer responding to a novice knower (Fricker, 2003), potentially enabling some re-distribution of knowledge. Kgase wished for feedback that would advise her, suggesting that she would like to receive comments along the lines of: "If you could do this and this maybe you will excel and your paragraph or your sentences would make more sense" (see

Ferguson , 2009). Dialogical feedback then can also help the participants to identify errors, as Lande said, identify "where I went wrong or if I missed something".

Fricker (2007), as discussed in Chapter Two, explains that a hermeneutical resource is a collection of social experiences and how society interprets these social experiences. The role of such hermeneutical resources is to enable people to interpret, understand, and make meaning of social experiences. People can then use hermeneutical resources to understand their experiences, share these experiences, and collaborate with others to establish a shared understanding and a shared social interpretation of these experiences. The construction of hermeneutical resources can only take place, however, if people are allowed to participate, if people have access to social goods, and if people are recognised as peers. In the context of this study, the participants did not experience the dialogical nature of feedback very much in a way that built their capacity as knowers. The data repeatedly demonstrated that they had experienced feedback as related to corrections, usually ones focused on a surface level, which they had to implement.

Unfortunately, such feedback which focuses on surface levels of grammar reduces the chances for participants to gain epistemic access to participate in their capacity as knowers and learn how to become full and successful members of teaching practice (Morrow 1994). Marsha's complaint is fitting when she said: "Feedback is not giving me enough information so that I can make good progress".

The kind of hermeneutical injustice that participants might experience here is a moderate hermeneutical injustice. This type of injustice as discussed in Chapter Two might not damage participants permanently as they are still learning and still participating as novices in the teaching practices, despite the paucity of meaningful feedback. Lande said that "the quality that you learn from the other subjects is the same quality you bring in others. So, we are all right in particular ways". However, I argue that participants are learning to become teachers and they go through modelling phases of teaching practices. The practice of feedback, particularly, is a key teaching practices that is being modelled to the participants by their academics. The manner in which feedback is modelled might influence the participants' practices of feedback when they are qualified and practising educators (Selvaraj, Azman, & Wahi, 2021). Bumblebee expressed this strongly:

> If I had bad experiences in foundation phase, I don't want the same thing to happen with the child. I am not sure about the quality that [I will be] giving the child. And if you are a [student] teacher you don't get good feedback how are you going to give feedback to your child? How are you going to give them feedback? I feel like I should start with you as a teacher to get proper feedback then you will know 'OK, ahhh this is how I am supposed to give feedback'. Because now I feel like I'll be writing good even if the thing is not good enough.

I discussed the temporal nature of experiences in Chapter Four, in that experiences are historical, contextual, and have an imagined future. Feedback is an experience that participants go through in their various assignment tasks and in assessment processes. As we have seen in the stories of participants, feedback experiences build on each other – from past experiences to current experiences to the imagined future. Some unintended and sometimes undesirable consequences might endure through time and emerge in future practices of feedback as Bumblebee alluded to. The practice of feedback as a temporal practice might carry similar enduring and harmful tendencies which can shape future practices of feedback and for this reason Bumblebee said: "I need to be corrected. I need to know where I am going wrong".

All this may turn into a dangerous vicious cycle of more extensive hermeneutical injustice. Participants might be unknowingly caught in the cycle and repeat the undesired ways of practising feedback in future as qualified teachers, perpetuating the hermeneutical injustice they too experienced at university. Marsha's comment can be seen as a threat of such extensive hermeneutical injustice when she said: "Mna[20], I feel that they need to develop us. We need to grow in this now because next year they will be sending us to schools. What are we going to do there?" While Sadler (2010) recognises that the construction of feedback requires time and feedback is a complex and a problematic practice for academics, most academics have not been trained in the practice of feedback. My participants themselves alluded to the complexities of feedback and some of these complexities might further contribute to epistemic injustice.

If feedback only focuses on the surface level of grammar, participants might suffer from an injustice of misrecognition where feedback does not recognise the students' attempts at meaning making. The effort that participants put into their assignment tasks is not recognised as valuable, important, and needed, despite their wrong grammar. Misrecognition in this respect might impact negatively on the participants' self-confidence and self-esteem, especially where their use of the English language is concerned. The tendency for feedback to focus on the surface level of grammar can perhaps be understood from a notion that the participants have a 'language problem' (Boughey, 2002). Perhaps when academics assess participants' assignments, they find participants' faulty grammar too glaring and feel unable to ignore it. It is perhaps more tempting for academics to point out to students that their proficiency in the English language is lacking instead of recognising how the participants have tried to make meaning for themselves. Bumblebee explained that:

[20] Mna or Mina, means 'I' or 'me', and is often used as an utterance before a statement about the speaker or their opinion.

Sometimes I also feel like most people are not English speakers and they are not going to be good in English. So, most of the time, you find that you would have gotten a better mark, it is just that your English is very poor, and they just give you a mark and say, 'Work on your grammar'.

Bumblebee understood this when she said that "some didn't even get the background in English". The issue of the 'language problem' in South African higher education has long been a political matter (Boughey & McKenna, 2017; 2021). The 'language problem' refers to mostly Black participants having difficulties with using English correctly. This tendency to focus only on participants' grammar errors can be further understood from past experiences of the participants such as Marsha. Here is her story.

Marsha's story

Marsha, a resilient and attractive young lady, has two sisters. Marsha and her sisters were brought up by her mother, who was employed as a domestic worker. "My mother never had much but she loved and supported us in every way she could". Marsha spent her primary and high school years at local government schools. Marsha related that, "I was only taught English in Grade 4 and the English was not up to standard. The only chance I got to learn English was when my mom took me for extra English classes at a White, girls-only school". Marsha attended these extra classes on Fridays. "I also was a girl guide, and I could speak English with the White girls there". Again, we see the ways in which a mother's agency provided her daughter with opportunities to access the dominant language and culture. These dominant practices have been rewarded by the social mobility offered by a university education. In order for us to understand this from a theoretical point of view, we need to understand that the dominant languages and cultural practices that universities embody and promote, possess power. This power shapes the outlook of participants, who participants become, and how they might behave and interact with others in their current and future epistemic, academic, and social spaces (Fricker, 2007).

Marsha's academic problems began in Grade 11 when some subjects became difficult for her. Marsha referred mostly to her battles with the subject English. "Mna, my English teacher from high school couldn't do or complete an English lesson or period without saying 'Ach, I don't know this.'" In Grade 12, Marsha's difficulties got worse. Her mathematics teacher took maternity leave and the teacher who replaced her soon left for a better teaching position elsewhere. As a result, Marsha's Grade 12 mathematics class was "left with no teacher", a phenomenon that is common in township schools, particularly in Maths and Science where there are not enough qualified teachers (Bloch, 2013) . Furthermore, her physical sciences teacher "only read from the textbook. I don't know whether she didn't know how to teach, or maybe she didn't love her job and was not passionate. I really don't know. She spent the whole period just reading from the textbook. Every day she would just read from

the textbook from whatever page until the period ended. There was no practical work, no experiments. Nothing. Just reading from the textbook".

"The lack of teachers and proper teaching had an impact on my performance". Marsha had wanted to further her studies at university. Unfortunately, "our high school did not tell us anything about university, what to expect and how to work so that we can be ready for university. We were never encouraged to apply, never told about university, never given forms, nothing. After matric you are on your own". The odds were seemingly stacked against Marsha as she stated that, "I didn't pass matric that well". Nevertheless, Marsha, with her resilient nature, was not about to give up.

Marsha needed to re-write her matric examination so that she could obtain the exemption necessary for university access. In order to do this, Marsha enrolled in an upgrading programme which prepared her to re-write her matric. Marsha was determined. "I am a hard worker. In order for me to achieve anything, I must be prepared to put in effort. This upgrading programme gave me what high school should have given me. The achievement that I got showed me that the problem was not with me but with the kind of teaching that I got in matric".

When black students enter higher education institutions in South Africa, many of them are regarded as underprepared for the demands of learning at university. Some of the participants come from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and this contributes to participants' under preparedness at university (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007; Pillay , 2010), as discussed in Chapter One, and so clearly articulated by Marsha. These participants, as Boughey (2002) reminds us, are positioned as underprepared and as having a 'language problem' before they even engage with the curriculum, and this has the potential to impact negatively on their success.

Participants' experiences of being positioned as having poor English and then only getting feedback focused on such problems reminded me of a Setswana idiom which says: "Ke kgomo ya moshate, wa e gapa o molato – wa e lesa o molato". A literal translation of this idiom reads thus: "It is a royal cow, and you will be found guilty whether you herd it, or you leave it"[21]. The participants indicated that regardless of their attempts to engage with their assignments, the feedback would always focus on their use of English.

While seemingly neutral, as anyone could have low language proficiency, the dominance of the argument that student challenges emerge primarily from their poor language abilities is arguably racist. Back in 1994 when apartheid ended and black students began to enter previously white

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[21] The English equivalent is probably the saying: "Damned if you do and damned if you don't".

universities in some number, Bradbury argued that a focus on participants' language problems allowed academics to place participants' challenges outside of the university's responsibilities while not having to point to issues of race. A basic level of language competence in the medium of instruction is undoubtedly necessary for university success, and the shocking education experiences detailed by Marsha and researchers such as Venkat, (2012), Bloch (2013) and Jansen, (2011) undoubtedly contributes to participants' struggles at university. But it can be argued that much of the concern about 'poor language' emerged as a reframing of the apartheid idea that Black participants are unable succeed in higher education because they have not developed sophisticated cognitive abilities compared to their White counterparts (Reilly, 2016). When such claims became abhorrent, they were replaced with the explanation that it is participants' poor language competence that leads to their challenges in higher education (see Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

The enduring nature of the discourse of the 'language problem' presented many obstacles for the participants as they carefully tried to navigate the epistemic space of the university. Their 'lacks' in this regard were then further emphasised by the feedback focused on language correction. Research has shown that participants like Marsha did not receive much exposure to the kinds of middle-class home and school literacies which may have more in common with the literacies expected in the academy (Bharuthram & McKenna, 2012). This is an indication of the university's need to teach more explicitly with the goal of epistemic access rather than an explanation for student failure. Boughey and McKenna (2017:971) argue that "dominant assumptions tend to locate the difficulties that the participants have in using English in academic contexts as a result of their not having mastered the forms of the language or as a result of the lack of a set of acultural, asocial language skills". Perhaps the 'language problem' is part of the explanation for the feedback to default to participants' surface level of grammar proficiency.

The participants felt that the focus on grammatical errors and the dearth of comments about meaning-making left them ill-prepared both to take on the requisite literacy practices and to develop their capacity as future givers of feedback. Each of the five participants indicated the relationship between such surface-level feedback and power and it is to the issue of power that I now turn.

Feedback that Exerted Power over Participants

Lande suggested that at times she found the feedback she received to be dismissive of her attempts, through comments such as: "You didn't understand correctly, go and read my slides". All the participants spoke of times where they did not feel that their efforts were being recognised or engaged with, because the feedback was only in the form of correction and often at a superficial level. Bumblebee, for example, indicated: "I don't want to be mean or anything, but I feel like what he wants,

he wants. With him it's just his knowledge. He wants you to understand things the way he wants. I feel like if you did this and that maybe you will be able to solve the problem. You are always frustrated". Feedback is by its very nature fraught with potential power imbalances. On the part of participants, receiving feedback on one's work can be emotionally complicated (Zembylas, 2015; 2017). On the part of academics, providing feedback can lead to a number of intentional or unintentional playing out of power differences because academics exercise their identity and their agential power in the construction of feedback. Academics spend a lot of time assessing participants' assignment tasks and constructing feedback that could help the participants to develop "abilities to produce responses to assessment tasks that are divergent rather than convergent, and complex rather simple" (Sadler, 2010: 535). Unfortunately, academics often do not have much time to construct this kind of feedback because of the growing numbers of participants they teach and assignments they need to assess in higher education (Barnett, 2007; Case, Marshall, McKenna, & Mogashana, 2018; Mathebula & Calitz, 2018; Mathebula, 2019). This may be one reason why the construction of feedback then defaults to pointing out participants' errors which often leads to them experiencing feedback as exerting unfavourable power over them which can take away their voice in the feedback practice as Rita Joe recites in her poem.

I lost my talk
The talk you took away
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballot about my world
Two ways I talk
Both ways I say
Your way is more powerful
So gently I offer my hand and ask
Let me find my talk

So I can teach you about me

Rita Joe, "I Lost My Talk," from Song of Eskasoni.

Bengsten and Barnett (2017) argue that learning at university can be a challenge for participants even where academic support systems are in place. The participants sometimes try to figure out what academics want, in order to comply with often hidden demands. The problem is there was not much dialogue where the students and academics could connect with each other for a shared understanding, interpretation, sense and meaning-making (Fricker, 2003; 2007). Paulo Freire (1970) states that dialogue is central in human engagement. Dialogue, as discussed previously, is a platform

that hosts processes of making sense and meaning, shared understanding, and collective interpretation and can thus mediate the power imbalances inherent in feedback. Medina (2017: 41) emphasises that "meaning-making and meaning-sharing are crucial aspects of a dignified human life".

Waghid (2012) reminds us that South Africa is a democratic country and as educators in this country we ought to embrace democratic virtues in our teaching. Such democratic virtues include participating actively in dialogue, sharing understandings, collective interpretation, accepting and making space for different views and opinions, reaching consensus, caring, and taking responsibility for others. These democratic virtues may be seen to belong on the big cultural, social, and political stage but they do not end there. Democratic virtues are the building blocks of all dialogues, including dialogues that take place in epistemic spaces, in pedagogic and academic spaces of a lecture hall, of written and verbal feedback.

Dialogical feedback allows students to be heard as they engage with the knowledge of the field and their academics. Dialogical feedback can allow students to try as hard as they can to express and interpret academic norms in their capacity as knowers. It does not matter if the participants' expressions and interpretations of these norms are "inchoate or embryonic" (Medina, 2017). As Lande indicated: "I am still learning about teaching; about child development. So, we don't know if we are on the right track. We have to find resources about child development". As discussed previously, feedback could ideally be used as a hermeneutical resource or to guide participants to the relevant hermeneutical resources with which they need to engage in the process of sense-making and meaning-making. When academics give feedback, they take up their position as good informants and use their well-earned and cultivated epistemic authority to make the expectations explicit and help participants develop an understanding of these norms through feedback (Fricker, 1998; Kotzee, 2017). Feedback then can also be used to guide participants as they try hard to express and interpret the norms of academic literacies more intelligibly (Fricker, 2007; Kotzee, 2017).

As discussed in Chapter One, one of the places where verbal feedback can flourish is during a lecture where participants interact with their academics and their peers. Verbal feedback in this sense is beneficial because it makes participants part of making sense and making meaning. Although meanings that are constructed during verbal feedback may be diverse or divergent, participants get a chance to construct their meanings, check their interpretation and understanding and share these with others (Kerr, 2017). Verbal feedback requires mutual understanding, interpretation, and recognition of others' inputs (Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017). Unfortunately, all the participants complained that there was little opportunity for dialogue during lecture time. Kgase said: "You go to

a lecture – the lecturer will speak – you rarely ask him questions in a lecture because we are just listening and there are slides. We just listen and download the slides".

The data suggested that the participants experienced their positioning as being "receptacles to be filled by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled the better the participants they are" (Freire, 1970: 45). All five participants in this study referred in various ways to the need to memorise, re-package knowledge, and repeat it. Kgase said that the view of academics was: "'We [academics] want it exactly how we want it. We want you to answer this way'. They want you to give a definition of term their way." Bourney indicated "It is just like that in the manual. You write it exactly like that". This suggests that the academics in this case were possibly not able to be the 'good informants' called for by Fricker (2003; 2007). Fricker's work (2003) suggests that in order to have the credibility required of good informants, the students would need to see their academics as competent and trustworthy. While the data did not suggest any concerns by the participants about the academics' competence, there seemed to be a lack of trust in their relationships with them, emerging from what the participants experienced as feedback which exerted power by demanding compliance.

Unfortunately, feedback that is experienced by the participants as exerting power then affects the credibility of the feedback itself. It was clear in the case of all five participants that feedback was largely experienced as calling for compliance and correction. Marsha commented that "feedback did not show how you understand the work you have been doing". This is likely to confuse participants and they might experience what Fricker (2007) calls a hermeneutical lacuna (as discussed in Chapter Two). In this instance, a hermeneutical lacuna is harmful because it "puts someone at an unfair advantage when it comes to making sense of their social experience" (Fricker, 2007: 1). The social experiences for the participants constituted making sense of the curriculum content and taking on of the related literacy practices in discussing that content.

A hermeneutical lacuna often leads to hermeneutical marginalisation (Fricker, 2007; 2017). When participants are hermeneutically marginalised, they might be prevented from entering in epistemic exchanges and participating with others in epistemic and academic settings because they do not have the epistemic currency that can sustain them. Although studies found that university participants in general do not know how to use feedback (Price, Handley, Millar, & O'Donovan, 2010; Ajjawi & Boud, 2017; Henderson, Ryan, & Phillips, 2019) the data in this study showed that the nature of the feedback was generally superficial. Bourney commented that: "feedback is in the clouds".

Fricker (2007) cautions that hermeneutical injustice can take place without anyone directly causing it because hermeneutical injustices are nuanced, and can go unnoticed for a long time. Medina (2017)

however, refutes Fricker's cautionary statement and argues that there are hermeneutical responsibilities that are neglected. Feedback, for example, is not a mindless activity that takes place automatically. Feedback has agential and identity properties built into it by those who give feedback.

However, academics alone cannot be blamed alone for feedback that causes hermeneutical injustices. As discussed earlier, there are mediating factors that prevent academics from giving meaningful feedback that is free of hermeneutical harm. Academics might be adhering to institutionalised practices of giving feedback only to find that these are inadequate (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Medina (2017: 42) points out that institutions, such as a university, "bear different kinds of responsibility for their hermeneutical neglect in certain areas". Academics do not have complete freedom to act as they wish, nor do they work without constraints of workload and institutional structure. But it needs to be noted that even though feedback is a practice that has been researched in depth, studies show that feedback is still a contentious issue and is often ineffective (Winstone et al., 2017; Henderson et al., 2019) as discussed in Chapter Three . All this suggests that there is a need for the university to rethink feedback practices and also examine their assessment policies for commentary on feedback practices.

The assignments that the participants submitted for assessment, which they shared and discussed with me, can be seen to entail entering into what Fricker (2003, 2007) refers to as a testimonial exchange for both participants and academics. If knowledge and literacy practices are all seen to have identity implications (McKenna, 2004), then learning can be seen to entail opportunities for testimonial justice or injustice. The role of feedback is to mediate the exchange between participants and academics, but this was not evident in the data. The participants therefore might be seen to have experienced what Fricker (2007) refers to as a credibility deficit, where their attempts are not engaged with, but rather surface-level errors are penalised.

Lande and Bumblebee and other participants who were not part of this study were given a group assignment to complete. Lande was tasked with putting the assignment together and she was confident because "when I was writing, I felt like I am writing the right thing". Lande and Bumblebee were dismayed when they got feedback that said, "You were too brief". Lande and Bumblebee felt that their credibility was deflated by this feedback comment because there was no feedback about where they had gone wrong, what they may have missed or what needed more detail: "I don't know where I went wrong or if I missed something" (Lande). Bumblebee confirmed "We didn't know what to do again so that we weren't too brief, and we went extreme and beyond because we were trying to fulfil those wishes [the lecturer's expectations]. So, there was no 'You could have done this or whatever' – we still did not know what to do or what we did wrong". The scant feedback that participants got made them feel powerless.

Assignment tasks give participants chances to take up their role as speakers and use their developing voice to express how they made sense and made meaning for themselves. Lande and Bumblebee felt that the feedback they received did not take into account the effort that they had made to revise the first draft based on the feedback they got from their lecturer. Bumblebee imagined what she could have done in cases like these.

> If I was a lecturer, I was going to write a message to my participants and ask them 'What are you trying to say' if it was a paragraph that I didn't understand at all…I will also put a question mark and say 'Re-read this paragraph' a small thing like message 'Re-write this paragraph'.

In order to minimise the power that feedback seems to exert on participants, Barnett (2007) suggested that pedagogic relationships are needed but take effort to nurture. Bourney indicated, "I feel like if they created an environment … that if you have a problem: come to us, we are always here". These pedagogic relationships can hopefully bridge "the social distance" that power can create between students and academics (Yang & Carless, 2013: 290; Carless & Winstone, 2020). Freire (1970: 48) argued that pedagogic relationships have the potential to "resolve teacher-student contradictions". The data indicated that the participants respected the social distance that exists between them and their academics and were fully aware of the agential power of their academics in the process of feedback but wished they had more engaged and open relationships with them.

> Even though he has his methods, he [lecturer] should have at least said 'I'd like you to use more complex methods or this more strategic ntonintoni'[22] and not just say 'No, this is wrong, this is not correct'. (Marsha)

The kinds of pedagogic relationships that Barnett (2007) advocated for can encourage dialogical feedback to emerge, as discussed in Chapter Three. One of the benefits that came out of our conversations is that the participants realised for themselves that feedback can be dialogical, and they came to this realisation after several conversations. Seemingly this study benefited participants more that I imagined because they learned or rather imagined what feedback could be like.

Bourney spoke to the issue of feedback as a space for growth and learning:

> I will not be a changed person if you don't give me solid information that will allow me to grow. To be outside of the box that I am in. So, I am in the box. Take me out of the box show me what is around the box and put me back so that when I am in my box, I can say 'OK, I saw

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[22] ntonintoni as an isiXhosa word which means possibilities or other considerations

the four corners of the box. What can I use inside and outside the box to make sure that I as a person can grow?'

The participants made clear their preference to be part of the feedback process. Bourney's analogy refers to how feedback can enable her to gain epistemic access so that she can become a full and knowledgeable participant in the practice of teaching. Participants displayed what Barnett (2007) called solicitude, which is a kind of self-care or self-nurturing. Solicitude also means that they understood that they needed to make an effort to learn in order to be successful. However, students do not always know how to navigate the academic space because of unfair and disabling power dynamics. Bourney's comment describes this solicitude:

> I would love to contribute to my own feedback because I would be trying to back myself up. I'd rather have it that way. From that point on, I'll be like 'OK, this is how I view it. How can I use my view to express the essay I have given you so that it makes sense to you as well?' That is what I expect really. I write. You give me feedback. Then I can tell how I can use it [feedback] to make you understand my point of view.

Solicitude "leaps ahead of the student, not so much as to determine precisely the journey that participants will take but to open up possibilities" (Barnett 2007: 130). In this way, participants can enter the processes of sense-making and meaning-making for themselves with feedback support. In this understanding, feedback can intentionally and carefully unlock the freedom for participants to participate in the academic space in their capacity as knowers (Freire, 1970; Fricker, 2007; Bengtsen & Barnett, 2017).

Feedback then could go beyond controlling performance or expecting participants to simply comply with what academics want. Lande phrased this call for compliance as: "I don't know what he wants. I don't know how to put it in the way that he wants" and Kgase explained it thus: "In this particular module they want to you give answers in a certain way. They want you to give them a definition of a term their way. Even though you understand – 'OK, I understand what university means. It's an institution where people further their studies' but then they are like 'No, we want you to answer this way'". If participants' learning is controlled, participants might not be able to learn to be independent thinkers. They might think that all they need to do is to comply and pronounce ideas that are not their own. This may constrain authentic learning which by its nature is characterised by an "unbridleness, openness and open-ended character… which cannot be controlled" (Bengsten & Barnett, 2007: 121-122) and is evidenced by hermeneutical virtue.

In the context of this study, hermeneutical virtue emerges when participants can take part in the feedback process to come to a shared understanding (Honneth, 2003; Sandberg & Kubiak, 2013). Waghid (2012: 108) further explains that "as teachers we act together with our participants to the extent that we expect to learn with and from them, and we feel less threatened by occasions in which we sometimes need to admit that we do not know or understand everything". As Kgase commented:

> Sometimes you [lecturer] are wrong. If I have a strong opinion about something, it can be processed this way and that way and there is some form of 'OK, I understand where we are going', and feedback was exchanged between you and me.

The playing out of power between the novice learners and the academics was experienced as silencing and dismissive by the participants. Lande said: "It's not nice not knowing where you stand with academics". The role of feedback in this respect is to manage these unequal relationships. Unfortunately, if feedback is given in ways that exert power over participants, these unequal and asymmetrical relationships might grow further apart, and participants are likely to experience hermeneutical marginalisation.

Hermeneutical marginalisation, as discussed in Chapter Two, prevents participants from gaining access to hermeneutical resources and coming to access the powerful knowledge offered by the curriculum. Participants might also not be able to contribute to building hermeneutical resources in their capacity as knowers. Lastly, the contribution of participants might not be sustained because they might not have sufficient knowledge resources to sustain their participation. All this suggests that the feedback discussed in this study is not creating conditions for the (re)distribution of knowledge to take place (see Fraser, 2003). Although the participants have multiple chances to overcome hermeneutical marginalisation by virtue of their continued learning at university, the examples of feedback that they shared with me over an extended period of time seemed to constrain the ease with which they took on the knowledge and ways of knowing expected of them.

Give me a feedback break!

Even though the findings discussed in this chapter showed that feedback operated at the surface level of grammar, that feedback exerted power on the participants, and at times caused misrecognition and hermeneutical injustice to occur, there were isolated instances in the data where feedback recognised the participants' identities and effort. In one of our conversations, Bumblebee came across a feedback comment in one of her assignments and she read the feedback comment out loud:

This is a good assignment. You have a good grasp of the theories and you know how to apply them. Well done. Perhaps you could improve your writing and English. One of the best ways of doing this is through extensive reading.

Here we see an example of feedback that validates the participant and has potential to encourage self-confidence. While it may seem easy to give affirming feedback when the assignment met the lecturer's expectations, as is the case in the comment shared from Bumblebee above, affirming feedback was also found on occasion where there were problems with the assignment. For example, Kgase commented: "her feedback is motivating. She gives you a sense like she is interested, and I like that because feedback like that makes you want to pay attention. Unlike other subjects where people just write a comment, and you lose interest in the whole subject because the feedback is boring. But with this one, it motivates you. It's like I get the feedback that I want". Kgase here experienced the feedback as meaningfully engaged with her attempts so that even where the work is being challenged, it is done so with an interest in her attempts. This brings to mind the notion of teaching with an 'ethics of care' (Tronto, 1989, 2010; Zembylas et al., 2014) that is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. Barnett (2007:58) argues that the role of a university is to support the participants' preparedness to learn, encourage them to enhance their self-confidence, more importantly, sustain the heightening levels of learning and their "mode of being" (Honneth, , 2003; Sandberg & Kubiak , 2013).

As we have seen, motivation goes hand-in-hand with self-realisation, self-confidence, and self-esteem of participants. Although feedback is a practice that has been researched for decades, Torres, Strong, & Adesope (2020) and Ajjawi, et al., (2021) suggest that a research project that examines the features of feedback that have potential to raise the motivation levels of participants is needed. This research then can influence academics to construct feedback that portrays these features for the benefit of all participants in higher education. More importantly, as this study shows, feedback needs to make the norms of the field explicit, open possibilities for participants to gain epistemic access, and support the processes of meaning-making.

Feedback that engages with student's attempts at meaning-making can ensure improvement going forwards (Pitt & Norton, 2016). Kgase shared another example of affirming feedback:

The feedback was nice. She gave us feedback as a whole class also. The feedback she gave me, she asked me questions. She was pleased with my writing. It was not really 'fix that, fix that'. It was comments like 'Nice story, you could have said more here, but you don't have an artefact for that'. I downloaded an artefact for my story and the artefact was good for my story. She went an extra mile and explained to the whole class. She didn't only give us feedback as individuals. She gave us feedback on how to write the next story.

The data consistently showed that the manner in which feedback is given, fostered how the participants related to the feedback, and how they responded and used the feedback. Bourney commented that: "She is happy if you express yourself in your own words and not use big words. She gives you feedback like 'Ok, I am with you with the story, I understand what you are saying, this is nice, oh, you learned from this'".

Participants at university are expected to practice academic writing in various forms, dependent on, among other things, their field of study. It is important to add that reading and writing are practices that go hand in hand. Writing cannot take place in the absence of reading and vice versa. Reading and writing, as Giroux (1988) argues, are not technical literacy skills. Rather they are "intricately entwined with the people doing the reading and writing" (Bharuthram & McKenna, 2006: 582). This means a particular text may be understood in various ways depending on the reader. Bumblebee got feedback that addressed particularly the benefit of reading:

> She suggested for me to read books and when you read books you come up with words that you can use. I know I must read academic books or thesis. Sometimes you know a word, but you don't know how to use that word. I don't have to use bombastic words to express myself when I am writing my assignments.

At university, participants are expected to follow the reading and writing practices of the particular academic context. This can be challenging for participants because academic writing is peculiar (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). It is only through practising repeatedly and getting meaningful feedback, that these practices can become easier for participants. In keeping with my own experience of finding academic writing challenging, the participants all indicated that they found the expectations of academic writing to be significant. Bourney said that:

> They look at academic writing more because we come with high school writing. I feel like they are trying to get us to do academic writing. For me to know how far I am with this academic writing, tell me – talk to me – explain – I am here.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a look at the stories of Bumblebee and Marsha and then drew on data from all the participants to consider the ways in which feedback that is focused on surface-level correction failed to enable epistemic access and ensure epistemic justice. In receiving feedback that took the form of correction and demanded compliance, the participants were subjected to both hermeneutical and testimonial injustices. The feedback did not enable the participants to make sense of the curriculum content, the literacy practices, or the lecturer's expectations and so they were in effect

'shut out' of knowledge-creation in the field; this chapter thus linked superficial feedback with hermeneutical injustice and a lack of re-distribution of the powerful knowledge of the academy. The participants also reflected on how they felt that their attempts and intentions were not recognised and they expressed this vehemently, referring to the feedback as "grammar bullshit"; this chapter thus linked superficial feedback with testimonial injustice and a lack of recognition of who the participants were and what they brought with them. The chapter ended with reflections on the useful feedback received from one particular lecturer.

In the next chapter I present Kgase 's story and look at the particular forms in which participants received feedback, from marks to rubrics, and feedback from tutors and peers, and feedback verbally or in writing.

Chapter Six – "There are no comments. Just marks"

And in the naked light, I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more
People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs that voices never shared
And no one dared
Disturb the sound of silence

'The sound of silence'
By Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel (1965)

Kgase's story

Kgase was raised by her father and her mother with an older sibling. Kgase started pre-school at the age of two in an English kindergarten and for her school foundation phase she went to an Afrikaans primary school and was taught in Afrikaans until she was in Grade 4. The school system then changed, and the language of instruction became English. Kgase was taught and learned in the English language from Grade 4 until she completed high school. Kgase's father "studied a lot, he is an engineer and he wanted me to follow that route or become an accountant". Kgase's mother runs a home-based business and her brother was pursuing the arts at the time of writing this story.

Kgase's father wanted her to study physical sciences and mathematics in high school because that would enable her to enrol for qualifications that would lead her to careers with a good salary package. Kgase tried to fulfil her father's wishes and for Grade 12, she included physical sciences and mathematics as subjects. Unfortunately, Kgase did not enjoy these subjects: "It wasn't for me. I wanted to be a teacher and changed mathematics and physical sciences for math literacy and business studies. I enjoyed business studies". Kgase wanted to be a teacher from a young age and she wanted to pursue her studies in the field until she could become an academic at a university or work within the education field.

Kgase's matric year was "rough because I was in and out of hospital. I missed a lot of work and I had to catch up on everything. My teachers were helpful, and they helped me to catch up, they gave me extra classes and helped me to prepare for my final exam. I only wrote the last two papers of my prelims. Prelims prepare you for the final examination and I did not have that opportunity". The teachers cared for Kgase to the extent that Kgase wrote her final exams "from the Deputy principal's office because the office chair was comfortable". The care that Kgase experienced from her teachers

influenced her to become a teacher; "I want do the same for children. I also want someone to say 'My English teacher once did this for me'. My teachers in a way cleared the path for me". Unlike her father, Kgase was not concerned much about the lower salaries teachers earn compared to other professionals because, "I want to wake up in the morning to do something that I enjoy".

Kgase's teachers used to advise her that she had the potential to achieve much more, but she did not realise that during some of the individual and general talks, her teachers were actually giving her feedback. She thought that, "they were always on my case and I can do better. 'I want to help you, and this is what you must do in order to improve'. My teachers cared for me".

Kgase enjoyed a strong relationship with her teachers and could readily ask, "why this is wrong or if I needed some explanation or clarifications … if I did not understand something". Kgase also used the notes that her teachers gave her and made notes for herself. She used feedback to "see this is what I missed this is what I must correct". Kgase had a rich experience of feedback because she had multiple opportunities to submit essay drafts; "they usually discuss the first draft to explain what we needed to do and submit the second draft. The redraft worked well because you could see where you went wrong". Despite this rich experience, Kgase acknowledges that while she was in high school, she was not overtly aware of the nature of the feedback she got from her teachers. She did not think much about feedback and she often did not pay much attention to it. "I did not read the feedback and my work was full of comments. ... As long as we passed, we did not read the comments".

Although Kgase was largely oblivious of the richness of her experience of feedback in high school, she noted that the nature of feedback changed when she got to university and now depended largely on her own agency in calling for it: "I am not in high school where I was given feedback now it is up to me".

The 'stick' of marks

Kgase, towards the end of this study, told me that she was privileged to have been part of this study. She said she had an advantage over her peers because she learned about feedback. Kgase felt strongly that this study made her think more deeply about feedback and what feedback means for her. She even told me that through this study she was continuing to learn that she needed feedback and she made an effort to find feedback when she needed to. However, Kgase was not pleased with getting marks that were not accompanied with feedback and indicated that this was often the case. Bumblebee even said, "everything it's just good and everything is fine, but when you get to your marks you don't understand what happened". Kgase explain her frustration with marks in the comment below:

> Some of the feedback from our department come back with just a mark. That does not impress me because it is just a mark. I don't know how to work without comments. A mark is a mark is a mark. This makes me feel like I am not taken seriously. A mark does not say anything in terms of where I must improve. For this particular assignment, I got marks only, and I was concerned about how I am going to improve in the next one. There are no comments. Just marks. Just marks. How will I know how to improve? How am I going to work with this without comments? Feedback is what our marks live on.

The role of an assignment task is both to measure and develop students' learning. Participants for their part, need to demonstrate how they understand, interpret, and enact the practices the assignment promotes. Participants also need to demonstrate the process of sense-making and meaning-making. Clearly, the effort that participants put in their assignment goes beyond a mark. Data show that participants prefer feedback over marks because feedback should, as Lande states, "show how you got 80%." Lande indicated that you could put in days of work with a lack of certainty as to which aspects of the assignment are acceptable or which are off the mark and "at the end – Boom! - I get a 75%".

Rand (2017) argues that student form part of a knowledge society which operates within a social epistemology. Therefore, feedback needs to facilitate the dialogue and the learning process to encourage participants to learn with insight, with conscious thinking and purpose. Therefore if "feedback is one of the most powerful single influences on (student) learning, then feedback integral to a social epistemology must foster purpose within students and be useful to students – it must be valuable and worthwhile" (Rand, 2017: 45). It is clear that my participants needed their marks to be accompanied by feedback to help them figure out how to attend to areas that need their attention, as Kgase said, "If you want me to improve, show me how". Data show that participants have a desire to reconcile what they know and what is possible to know. Unfortunately, awarding them marks only might not help them to make the reconciliation. A mark on its own may even derail the attention of participants from what truly matters as they try to gain epistemic access (van Heerden, Clarence, & Bharuthram, 2016; Yin Kei Chong & McArthur, 2021). Marks do not have the developmental and formative function that feedback has (Gonzaga & Leibowitz, 2014) as Kgase said, "You won't understand what you are doing if you don't get feedback".

Some of Bumblebee's dissatisfaction with receiving marks was apparently related to the marking system:

> This is a mark. Another mark but I don't understand how he marks. Out of all this, I got a 23. I enjoyed all this, but I don't understand how he counts his marks. Like here it's nice, nice, nice. I don't understand.

The issue of timing in giving marks and feedback in formative assessment can be a confusing and complex process in higher education. Sometimes the assessment process is not transparent and students in general might not be able to understand what constitutes their marks (Taras, 2009). The participants often could not see a clear alignment between the marks they received and the expectations of the assignment task or even a relationship between the marks they received and the amount of work they had put in, and this created confusion (Wyatt-Smith & Adie, 2019). The literature shows repeatedly that feedback needs to initiate a dialogue to indicate clearly to participants which aspects of the task need their attention to subsequently yield a better mark when summative decisions are made (Taylor & Burke da Silva, 2013). The decision to award participants with marks alone sometimes reduces room for dialogical feedback to take place. As discussed in Chapter Three, feedback is seldom built into the design of assessment opportunities to possibly generate a dialogue, and this seemed to be the case across almost all the data. Lecturers and students then focus on the summative mark as the only form of communication which becomes unidirectional (Winstone & Boud, 2020). Data also show that marks are rarely dialogical and Lande's comment indicates this, even where some additional symbols are included:

> She just underlined there. I don't know if I made a grammar error or what, I don't know... I don't know where the remaining marks went to because the resources required were clearly indicated. We were supposed to collect counters and I collected buttons, so it's a resource.

Seemingly, marks are creating absences or gaps in the participants' knowledge about whether they performed well or poorly or whether they did well in some parts but not in others. The literature shows that if participants do not understand how marks were generated, they are likely to feel helpless and powerless and might also develop negative attitudes toward their lecturers (Chamberlin, Yasué, & Chiang, 2018).

As discussed in Chapter Two, when participants hand in their assignment task for assessment they take on their epistemic status as speakers and novice informants. However, when participants receive the assignments having been awarded with just a mark, they forfeit their informant-knower epistemic status and become passive recipients of knowledge, in the form of a measure of the value of their attempt. The mark is a measure, a weight, or a judgment of how much knowledge participants can provide within the confines of standards, criteria, outcomes, and curriculum. A mark has the potential to silence participants while increasing the knowledge gap, as Bumblebee said, "I don't know what I

know". Participants then are likely to unknowingly suffer from epistemic objectification, their agency is suppressed, and they are no longer active participants in the sharing of knowledge. In addition to this, the marks hide a significant chunk of knowledge which is in the best interest of participants to know. This chunk of knowledge constitutes a hermeneutical lacuna that is discussed in Chapter Two. There is no feedback that advises participants how to uncover this lacuna excerpt a mark that feels like "just another brick in the wall" (Pink Floyd, 1979).

A single mark might prevent a participant from understanding what constitutes the mark they received. As Lande said, "What happened to the other 25%? I don't know". Dialogical feedback can encourage lecturers to recognise the reasons participants need to understand the process of awarding marks, especially if there is no rubric that accompanied the assignment task (Bharuthram, 2015; van Heerden, Clarence, & Bharuthram, 2017). Data show that a mark might cause testimonial injustice to occur when the meaning participants are trying to convey is not accounted for, as Bumblebee said, "Sometimes it [feeling of unhappiness or confusion] is not about the marks. It is how did the lecturer understand your work? Because sometimes you will be writing and writing and writing. It is not about marks." Marks therefore might prevent participants from gaining epistemic access. Feedback comments are valuable because they can enrich the engagement of participants in epistemic settings (Pitt & Norton, 2016; van Heerden, Clarence & Bharuthram, 2017)

The participants, like all other students, are often happy when they achieve high marks and Bumblebee said, "It [high marks] actually makes you feel good". Bourney also commented, "I am happy about the mark". The literature shows that students in general are interested in marks because high marks can motivate them to work harder and influence their self-esteem and self-confidence (Winstone & Boud, 2020). High marks however do not always support the responsiveness, and moral aspect of care that participants need to be demonstrated as they take on new concepts and literacy practices as discussed in Chapter Two. Instead, high marks can have a short-term positive effect but encourage participants to focus on surface superficial knowledge. Marks inherently reduce a complex task into a simple number, and this can further reduce participants' understandings of assignments to a product (Ramsey, Franklin, & Ramsey, 2002) rather than a learning process. Marks maintain the power and authority that lecturers have over students especially where students are not able to contest their marks (Chamberlin et al., 2018). Focusing on marks, therefore, has the tendency to "obscure student attention to the formative purpose of feedback information" (Winstone & Boud, 2020:2).

The summative assessment process and feedback for learning have become entangled and their different purposes in teaching and learning are becoming unclear (Evans , 2013; Reiman & Sadler,

2017; Winstone & Boud, 2020). In order to manage the confusion between awarding marks and giving feedback, the literature recommends that marking approaches or assessment processes need to be made part of professional learning for lecturers, where a distinction is made between giving marks and engaging in feedback, and feedback can be positioned carefully within the assessment process (Norton, Floyd & Norton, 2019).

Rubrics: A marking toll or a friend of feedback?

As discussed, my participants indicated that they needed 'ticks' to be accompanied by feedback comments. Participants expressed a similar need for feedback where rubrics were used as an assessment tool. Participants indicated that they were sometimes given rubrics together with their assignment tasks however this was not the case in all modules. Across the data, it was clear that the participants needed feedback to explain the rubric and support their use of it to undertake their assignment and make sense of the feedback.

Marsha expressed this need when she said, "The rubric there is 2, 3, 1 and then they just tick 3, and you don't understand why did I get level 3?" Ragupathi and Lee (2020) state that students in general prefer to use rubrics because rubrics can provide feedback that highlight the strengths and weaknesses and the areas that need improvement. Such rubrics then support learning and encourage students to think on a deeper and informed level on the particular criteria indicated in the rubric. Feedback within rubrics then is most specific to the competency that participants need to strengthen. In addition to this, feedback emphasises the expectation and the description of the assignment, as discussed earlier. In this light, we can see that feedback and rubrics can function well together. This emphasises the idea that a rubric is specific to a particular assignment task. Therefore, the expectations regarding form and content for that assignment task needs to be explicit in the criteria of the rubrics (Mahmoudi, 2020; Kilgour, Northcote, Williams, & Kilgour, 2020).

Bumblebee described a rubric as "An excellent concept because if we were not given a rubric, I would have no idea of what and how I am supposed to do the assignment". Rubrics in higher education often form part of the assessment process. A rubric then "articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor" (Reddy & Andrade, 2010:435). The quality and the performance criteria of the rubric help students, in general, to decide the level of quality and performance they wish to achieve. As Bumblebee said, "So, I know I must add this much information so that I can get a mark in this aspect of the assignment". Rubrics have the potential to influence internal feedback and self-assessment (Bharuthram, 2015).

Rubrics, more importantly, make the descriptions and purpose of the task explicit, clear, and transparent. Rubrics can also clarify the learning actions that participants need to take to satisfy each assessment criteria the rubric promotes. Rubrics also support the lecturers' explanation about the assessment task and support participants in attaining the expected quality standards. Rubrics can also support participants as they grapple with the assignment task. Furthermore, rubrics have the potential to reduce the anxiety of participants, enhance their self-efficacy and self-regulation and keep participants focused on the assignment task as Bourney said in reflecting on an assignment without a rubric: "The problem is writing this assignment was a mission. I didn't know what to write, what is wrong, what is right".

The rubric also invites participants to think, plan, and imagine how they might enact the academic norms the assignment promotes. Rubrics also invite participants to reflect on how they will use their existing literacies, knowledge, and the learning material to construct the assignment task. We can say that rubrics encourage participants to make evaluative judgments for themselves and enhance self-efficacy and self-regulation, as discussed in Chapter Three (Usher, 2020; Chakraborty et al., 2021; Bearman & Ajjawi, 2021; Gladovic, Tai, & Dawson, 2021). However, all of this assumes that the rubrics are sufficiently explicit that students can obtain meaningful feedback from them. But as Marsha indicates, this was not always the case: "What is this specific thing that is required? Sometimes you get level 3, and they didn't comment".

For rubrics to be effective, they need to be very carefully designed for each task and students need to be supported in understanding how they should be used in their undertaking of the task and in their reading of the feedback. Marsha did not seem to have prior experience of using rubrics and expressed confusion as to what they meant:

> Coming to university was such a huge difference because when I got here there were rubrics for feedback, and you have to follow your rubric okanye [or] you try to follow the rubric.

The rubric seemingly did not help Marsha to make these evaluative judgements, and she found the rubric somewhat tricky to use. Unfortunately, in this particular case the rubric itself seemed instrumentalist and generic and only provided scant information. As McKenna (2007:25) pointed out years ago, students need to be introduced to and "inducted' into the use of rubrics. This induction can help students understand the role of a rubric in their learning. Students also need to learn, more importantly, how the rubric connects to the assignment question, and what is expected of them. Marsha explained her frustration about having to use a rubric that she was not familiar with:

> Sometimes you try to follow the rubric you find that you still didn't know where you went wrong. But you did it. I remember it was this module. I think it was our first assignment. I did what the rubric required me to do, and I just did it. Even on that [rubric] doing that thing, I still got a lesser mark. Even though you have to go according to what the rubric is trying to tell you to do, you still don't get it.

Rubrics are tools that are used at university, and as Chapter One showed, we need to acknowledge the extent to which students are finding it hard to meet the demands of learning in higher education and the extent to which the practices may seem strange. Perhaps one of the demands expected of students, in general, is to use a rubric. When students like Marsha, through no fault of their own, only encounter a rubric at university for the first time, they are regarded as unprepared. Marsha, as her story shows, was unlikely to have had the chance to use rubrics while she was still in high school.

The role of rubrics moves beyond showing performance criteria and serving as a marking tool, they also serve as a tool for learning and feedback (Wolf & Stevens, 2007; Bharuthram, 2015; Rangupathi & Lee, 2020). In this way, participants can have the freedom to explore related insights and seek relevant hermeneutical resources that can help them interpret the norms and help them make sense and meaning of the norms they are grappling with in the assignment. In this respect, Lande described what the role of a rubric could be like:

> Did the learner explain what theory this is? Did the learner give examples of how the theory can be used? and wena [you] can discover for yourself if you have explained the theory nicely. I gave examples of that theory. Is it descriptive and wena [you] you feel like I have described enough. But then the lecturer gives you one mark, and you feel like – but I studied as much as I could.

Inducting participants into rubrics and teaching them how to use a rubric should not be a once-off event, instead it is a "fluid and recursive process" (Bharuthram, 2015:425). Rubrics need to be used in conjunction with feedback (Wilkerson & Lang, 2017; Mahmoudi, 2020; Gyamfi, Hanna, & Khosravi, 2021). Well-designed rubrics can ensure that students "better adept at giving themselves feedback when pre-determined criteria form the basis of their assessment" (Gupta & Chauhan, 2020: 784).Rubrics, like assignment tasks and feedback, are different, and they serve different purposes. Therefore, lecturers might need to have ongoing discussions with participants where lecturers could invite participants to create rubrics for different assignment tasks with the lecturers. If participants can have this chance to co-create rubrics together with their lecturers, this can encourage participants to approach the assignment tasks more reflectively, understand what the assignment task requires with more clarity, and strengthen participants' assignment tasks in a deeper and more meaningful

way. Co-creating rubrics with participants can also reduce the power relations that often construct the relationship of students and their lecturers (Andrade, 2010; Crockett & Jackson, 2018; Kilgour, Northcote, Williams, & Kilgour, 2020; Zhao, Zhou, & Dawson, 2021).

In earlier sections, participants complained much about mark allocation and not knowing how to reconcile their marks with the assignment they submitted. Rubrics can coordinate the marking process for both lecturers and participants. Since rubrics are associated with the assessment criteria, rubrics can outline the allocation of marks according to each assessment criteria (Bearman & Ajjawi, 2021). However, care needs to be taken that the rubric aligns with the marking memoranda. Rubrics then can potentially solve some of the allocation of marks that participants were complaining about. Lande, however, suggested that rubrics would only be effective if "it is linked to the lecturer himself being able to mark according to the rubric".

Studies show that lecturers often use generic rubrics for their assessments and this creates a problem because each assignment takes its own form and works towards specific kinds of learning, as discussed earlier. Generic rubrics used across multiple tasks do not focus on a particular task or assessment criteria. Such rubrics do not invite students to reflect on the necessary learning actions and make decisions to enrich their assignment tasks. Generic rubrics cannot keep students focused on a specific task and set reasonable boundaries. Generic rubrics might not consider what students are capable of, and the context in which students approach the assignment task. Generic rubrics can make it difficult for students to understand what is required (Bearman & Ajjawi, 2021).

Besides the assessment criteria, lecturers could consider designing rubrics that match the assignment task's question, the assignment's structure, and the academic literacy practices the assignment expects. Other colleagues and assessors in the same field can give input in the design of the rubric to avoid confusion (Bharuthram, 2015; Dawson, 2017). However, rubrics need to be flexible enough not to limit insights and unexpected responses that students may bring to assignment tasks. This can be a real issue where specific marks are allocated to specific aspects of the task – students who then develop an 'out the box' response may find themselves penalized despite deep engagement with the task and impressive learning from the process. If used adaptively, such differing insights can influence and enrich the rubric (Gallardo, 2020; Ragupathi & Lee, 2020).
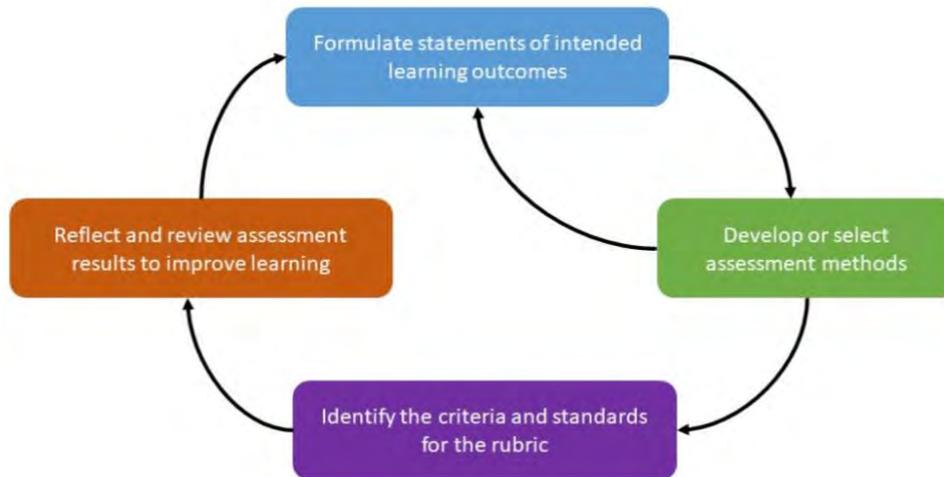
Figure 16: Rubric development as part of course design (adapted from Ragupathi & Lee, 2020)

As I have argued, creating rubrics collectively can encourage participants to draw on their existing literacies, knowledge and experiences and use these to create rubrics collectively. In this light, instead of using rubrics in a technical way and only as marking tools, rubrics can create conditions for the (re)distribution of knowledge. Participants can have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge and see rubrics as part of their learning process.

Since participants in this study were learning to become teachers, creating rubrics with their lecturers, could have enabled participants to take the competencies of creating a rubric into their classrooms when they are qualified and practising teachers (Bharuthram, 2015). Furthermore, if participants or students in general can create rubrics with their lecturers this could send a message to participants that lecturers recognise them as knowers and that their contribution is valued, necessary, and important.

The 'Ticks', the 'Ok's and the 'Nice' Feedback

As discussed in Chapter Two, students' assignments potentially serve as testimony to their participation as knowers and novices in the various academic literacies they are learning about. The 'ticks' the 'ok' and the 'nice' comments which my participants referred to, are positive and validate their participation. It is important however to understand what these symbols mean to the participants. Lande said, "I don't know if I was writing the right thing or if it is the type of work they want" but then in another conversation she explained that a "tick means I did something right. At high school, a tick meant you are correct. Even now as I learn [at university] a tick means my work is correct". Bumblebee said, "A tick is feedback, and I feel like [it says I] did well. My work is correct". While these symbols send a positive message to participants, there was no evidence that participants

are required to take any learning actions in relation to these symbols to advance their process of sense-making and meaning-making, as feedback should ideally provide.

Data show the affective nature of these symbols when Bumblebee happily said, "Here, this is what gets me excited sometimes. This 'Ok', 'Ok', 'Ok'. This shows me that this person read my assignment. These ticks and the okays. Up to the word 'Nice'". Participants also show that they feel recognised that academics indeed spent time reading the assignment, as Lande said, "When he says 'Ok' it means he actually read this". Recognition is a necessary human condition that participants need so that they achieve self-respect and increased self-esteem. Recognition "builds a person's fundamental confidence as an epistemic agent in their own right" (Fricker, 2018:2).

So far we can say that the symbols and single words of praise ('Ok' and 'Nice') allowed the participants in this study to enjoy the status equality and reciprocal recognition that Fraser calls for (Fraser, 2000, 2003). The literature also shows that positive feedback can increase a participant's motivation levels (Falchikov & Boud, 2007; Molloy, Borrell-Carrio, & Epstein, 2013). The recognition that participants might experience can gravitate towards epistemic appreciation, such as when Bumblebee said, "What I wrote is fine and he understands it". Although it can be said that where academics do not give feedback that requires participants to take learning actions. Unfortunately, such feedback does not suggest for participants what learning actions are possible to generate the much needed dialogue that can enhance epistemic access. Instead these appreciative symbols might promote the understanding of Fricker's (2003) uncritical receptive model.

The uncritical receptive model

The uncritical receptive model promotes an understanding that during a testimonial exchange, the hearer gains "knowledge just by being uncritically receptive to the speaker's word" (Fricker, 2003: 155). While academics seemed to agree with the participants' assignments through the symbol of a tick or a single comment of approval, there is no evidence that either the students or the academics gained knowledge through the process. The appreciative symbols only suggest that participants' assignments were received by the academics without any question and the participants in turn received this communication, often only in the form of a series of ticks, without question (Fricker, 2003).

The more Bumblebee thought and reflected particularly on the ticks, the more she began to wonder what these ticks mean for her. She asked, "Is he talking to me or is he talking to himself [through the ticks]?" Lande added to Bumblebee's concern by saying, "A tick is for the lecturer. It is not for me."

Data show that even though participants accepted the ticks, they needed some form of dialogue. Marsha said:

> I don't think they [the ticks] talk to me. I think they are talking to him because maybe he understood it so like [the tick means] 'Ok, I get this. I get what you are trying to say'. I don't know but I think he should have said 'Ok, I get your point but blah blah blah okanye [or], Ok this was clearly stated in this paragraph but add this and this and that, okanye [or], Yes you did well but this and this and that '. This is not giving me enough information.

Fricker (2003: 155) cautions that "a blanket policy of accepting the word of others unmediated by any critical filtering" is harmful. Participants for their part were not required to reflect on how they enacted the literacy practice and how they made meaning for themselves. They might make the wrong assumption that they know something while the depth of what is possible to know is not made obvious to them. Participants might also not account for themselves if they gained epistemic access or not. The chances for participants to reflect at the various levels that are discussed in Chapter Three might be restricted by the concept that something is either acceptable (by virtue of a tick in the margin) or unclear (by the absence of such marks). The possibility of sharing knowledge and gaining epistemic access might also be compromised (Marshal, 2003).

As the conversations were in progress, I wanted participants to reflect on the meaning of these appreciative symbols and so would often point to their assignments and ask: "What do you think these [ticks] mean?" Bumblebee was pondering on this when she said:

> In this paragraph, there are three ticks. Maybe she likes this paragraph. Here there is one tick. Does it mean she likes this one less? Why did I get those three ticks? I don't know. Maybe she didn't like this essay. Somewhere there are no ticks and maybe she didn't read this part. I don't know. You have those questions that you cannot answer for yourself. Then you go to the next one. One tick here, two ticks there or maybe she didn't find these interesting? Maybe this was not needed?

Medina (2011:17) argues that a proper assessment requires "looking into what happens before and after the exchange". The ipsative design of feedback discussed in Chapter Three encourages students in general to make choices and compare their work before and after feedback. However, appreciative symbols do not give participants much opportunity to reflect and take proper learning action. As discussed in Chapter Three, ideally, students in general submit multiple drafts before they submit the assignment for a summative assessment. Appreciative symbols without feedback do not offer participants an opportunity for reflection which would enhance the credibility of participants'

assignments. Although Fricker (2007) is of the opinion that there is no epistemic harm done where credibility is given, Medina (2011) argues that epistemic harms are not always obvious at the moment of credibility assessment and epistemic injustices tend to affect epistemic agents across multiple contexts, social and academic interactions. In the long run participants might endure a systematic testimonial injustice (Luzzi, 2016).

While credibility can give participants a sense of affect through a temporary good feeling, Giroux (1989: 58) argued that "the affective mode is necessary, but at the same time it is incomplete". A simple tick is not enough to sustain credibility and demonstrate that participants indeed made sense and made meaning for themselves.

Marsha recalled a task where she needed to bring to class all the rhymes that they knew when they were still in primary school. Marsha's rhymes received various ticks and the only comment that said 'Nice one'. Marsha did not understand the basis of the ticks and the comment because "these are rhymes do not come from the knowledge of my own. So, I am not sure what 'nice one' meant because I got these rhymes from Google and YouTube". It wasn't clear why Marsha went on to say:

> I would have liked to create my own rhyme. We can't be teaching the same rhymes that we were taught. We need to come up with new things that children see nowadays. Things that are interesting. Things that they know and see around. I wanted to create things from my experiences.

Medina (2011:16) draws our attention to instances where assessment can undermine credibility and cautions that "sometimes assessments can unintentionally be erroneous, spurious and accidental, others recalcitrant and systematic". Lande had a similar experience where the ticks seemed to be awarded by mistake and she relates: "This one is basically ticks, ticks, ticks. I see here it is written some abbreviation, I still don't know what that is. Then 'Great work. Thank you'. I didn't put a title and there is a tick, a tick, and another". The unintended errors or mistakes can inadvertently inflate the credibility of participants and consequently cause an epistemic harm to occur.

The findings that are presented above suggest that participants might be subjected to an unwarranted hermeneutical lacuna. As Bumblebee said, "the ticks are there, and it means I am correct, but in what sense am I correct?" The frequent use of ticks with an absence of feedback was seen to leave the participants in the dark. The participants seemingly were expected to receive the ticks with uncritical receptivity. The data further suggests there was limited evidence of critical dialogue, leaving the participants with degrees of uncertainty. Bumblebee complained about that: "Other paragraphs there

is no tick. You see what I mean? It makes me question what I have done that is good or what I haven't done correctly".

The inferential model

The participants in various ways articulated their desire to move beyond the uncritical-receptive mode. Fricker's inferential model promotes an understanding that participants can be required to "go in for a piece of reasoning that provides a justification" (2003: 156). The appreciative symbols were generally not accompanied by feedback comments and where comments were evident, they were often single word: 'Okay' or "nice' or 'Good'. This might have prevented dialogues from emerging (Fricker, 2003). Bumblebee said:

> I prefer ticks that go with a comment. There is no [opportunity for] revision. If there was revision, I would know where I went wrong and how. You have to be critical and I will accept it. This is my way of learning. In order for me to learn, I have to be criticised so that I can criticise myself. It is not only about good things.

The inferential model is suited for higher education because this is a place of argumentation, critique and evidence. Students in general are encouraged to adopt these academic norms so that their work can be as rigorous as the academic space requires. Students then are encouraged to support their claims with evidence for this much needed academic rigour. In order for feedback to encourage students to practice the rigour that is required at university, feedback could visibly and actively encourage them to attend to possible feedback question such as why, what, who, where and how. Lande, for example, got feedback that asked her, "What is your stance (position or point of view)?" She found this question useful and reflected the comments to mean "I didn't make my stance clear. Even over there I wrote something, and she asks 'Why?' so I didn't explain. I could have explained myself more." Feedback that demonstrates the characteristics of the inferential model places students and lecturers in a constant thinking and reflective mode that is needed to interpret the assignment task, the knowledge being communicated and the literacy practices being called upon to do so (Yang & Carless, 2013).

Data also show that feedback that operates within the inferential model is needed because as Bumblebee said, "You [lecturer] could have asked me to add such and such information or [require me to] back it up [my claims] with evidence". Marsha also said, "I did 'Good' but then, I need more … what what and more blah blah. Not just 'Good'". This shows that the ticks, 'ok', 'nice' and 'good' did not drive the participants to consult relevant hermeneutical resources to gain increasingly nuanced interpretations of the knowledge with which they are grappling.

The participants did not only share feedback they received from their lecturers; there were also some examples of feedback they received from their tutors, who were more senior students, usually a year or two ahead, and feedback they received from their peers. It is to each of these that I now turn.

Tutor feedback

Chapter Three discussed that students in general seem to prefer tutor feedback for various reasons (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020). This study also found that participants preferred tutor feedback to feedback from academics because tutors create a sense of belonging for students in general (Yale, 2019). Kgase said "The lecturers are always in a hurry and they make sure that in 45 minutes [the time of one lecture period] they have finished the chapter - you understand or not they don't care. They want to finish in that 45 minutes". Bourney also made this point explicitly when talking about consultations with lecturers, "It is such a process with them [lecturers] because they want appointments, and you have to waaaaaaait". As discussed in Chapter Three, it is almost impossible for academics to fully attend to participants' needs because of the growing numbers of students in higher education, heavy teaching loads, and other competing demands on their attention. Bourney then said, "It is easy to access our tutor to get whatever information."

Origgi (2012) helps us to understand how participants might have developed an epistemic trust in their tutors when she explains that epistemic agents depend on two types of epistemic trust: default trust and vigilant trust. Epistemic agents depend on default trust when they do not have a choice but to trust the process they find themselves in. Due to the fact that academics are not always available for participants, as indicated earlier, participants had no choice but to trust their tutors. Epistemic agents however use cognitive strategies, emotions, reputational cues, and inherited norms that help them filter the knowledge or information they receive from others. This filtering helps epistemic agents to develop vigilant trust. Data showed that participants developed vigilant trust in their tutors. Bourney explained that tutors "are hands-on. They tell us 'Dude, listen here, this is how it goes' and they actually break down all the information for us. They break it down to your level of understanding". Kgase demonstrated her vigilant trust in her tutors by saying:

> The tut [tutorial] is more productive. With the lecturer, you download the slides, but when you go to the tut, it makes sense because it's actually them [Tutors] teaching us what is going on. If there is something we don't understand, we don't go to the lecturers. We go to the tutor. I feel like the tutors practicalise the information and kind of explain what's it all about.

Tutors also regularly provided verbal feedback specific to the needs of participants. Lande indicated this by saying, "I believe in verbal feedback. The more a person speaks, the more I understand." Verbal

feedback can be beneficial for both students and lecturers because, unlike written feedback, verbal feedback takes place in real-time and in face-to-face environments. Verbal feedback can be spontaneous, unstructured, and quick. Bumblebee shared one of her experiences with verbal feedback:

> She does not tell you what to do. She will sit with you and say 'How about this in one paragraph?' In the meantime, you start writing and you are remembering that 'Oh, I meant to say this' and then you try to break it down and break it down. The next time you see her, you come with another draft and she goes over it with you. She suggests maybe it wasn't too good and maybe you can paraphrase here or whatever you try to say. There is more interaction, lots of interaction.

Bumblebee's comment shows that she consulted with a tutor who supports students, in general, to develop academic writing competencies. Boughey and McKenna (2021:68) who argue that it is problematic to assume that "there is a standard form of academic writing that can be taught to students outside of the context in which it will be used". Literacies operate in ways that are specific to their cultural practice and contexts. Therefore, students need to be supported to learn these specific ways of writing so that they can participate in the various literacy practices they encounter as they study in their teacher education programme.

Peer feedback

Chapter Three discusses the levels of reflection that peer feedback can facilitate. Peer review feedback is one of the practices that can potentially enable students to reflect at multiple levels. Reflecting at the various levels can help participants discover sophisticated learning actions and share these with others. Participants in this study engaged in a few instances of peer review feedback process. Bourney outlines the most common way of conducting a peer review feedback process:

> When we have assignments on a specific topic we have peer reviews whereby everyone receives a certain amount of essays and then you peer review them on a specific topic we have peer reviews – from your own experience. That helps because you are not the lecturer. You are not the tutor. But you are studying the subject so you give that person feedback. So it's like you give input to that person's work.

A peer feedback process resembles an epistemic setting where there is an exchange of knowledge and participants take part in their capacity as knowers. Kgase's comment indicated this active participation when she said:

Yes, you have that exchange because it terms like your own opinion and your own view, I feel like if I am wrong I will go and do research because sometimes you are wrong. If I have a strong opinion about something, it can be processed like this and like that then you have only one side of it. Somebody can explain: 'But I feel like it can be this way and that way' and then there is some form of 'OK, I understand where we are going'.

Peer feedback seemingly encouraged participants to go through a process of an internal self-evaluation and through internal feedback participants were able to compare their knowledge with their peers and their understanding of the task ahead of them with the approach used by their peers. Internal feedback becomes a "conscious and a deliberate act" (Nicol & Selvaretnam, 2021:13). Kgase indicated that peer feedback gave her a chance to "test your knowledge of the subject – because you act like you are the lecturer because you give input like you can't just say 'No, you are wrong.' You have to go back to your books to see if they [feedback from other peers] are right". Participants also identified how they could strengthen their knowledge through related external sources which are referred to as hermeneutical resources in Chapter Two. Participating in a peer review process can also encourage participants to self-correct and widen their perspective. In this understanding, a combination of self-evaluation, internal feedback and student agency can result in self-regulated learning (Nicol & Selvaretnam, 2021; Nicol & McCallum, 2021). The ability to self-regulate can give participants more power to control their learning (Fricker, 2007).

Peer feedback then encourages participants to practise the moral ethic of responsibility and care for the learning needs of others. Bourney demonstrated this care ethic when she said, "You do not want to be all negative but point out the positives and negatives – so you say 'This is not right' but I have to suggest a solutions so that you can improve". Data showed that a peer feedback process can encourage students to share knowledge and experiences, as Kgase said, "You apply your knowledge of the subject as well when you give that person feedback".

Bourney shared in one of the conversations that she found a particular subject very difficult. She is of the opinion that:

If I didn't get feedback from other people. I would not have passed Ling [Linguistics]. because Ling is very difficult but because I was able to work with different people and a person has a different view in a particular topic and this one has his view and I have my view, the whole collaboration of views.

Bourney's experiences of peer feedback demonstrates that the peers reflected at the level of construction and they found learning strategies that assisted her to learn and understand the subject.

Nicol (2021) explains that peer feedback can result in the creation of new knowledge. Reddy, Harland, Wass, and Wald, (2021) further explain that this new knowledge comes from the knowledge from peer review, combining knowledge of the subject, self-knowledge, and knowledge from others (Nicol, Thomson, & Breslin, 2014).

"Verbal feedback, it is better than written feedback"

In this respect the literature suggests that students can demonstrate the power of internal feedback if they reflect in writing to show how they might have prepared for verbal feedback (Nicol, 2021; Nicol & McCallum, 2021; Nicol & Selvaretnam, 2021). Tan, Whipp, Gagné, and Van Quaquebeke (2019) explain that verbal feedback can make participants feel empowered, increase their capabilities, encourage them to engage more, and increase their ability to evaluate their work.

Verbal feedback then is not a passive information session. Instead, verbal feedback has the potential to increase students' self-efficacy and self-regulation and participants themselves have a chance to deepen their understanding and as discussed in Chapter Three (Brookhart, 2017; Ryan, Henderson, & Phillips, 2019; Agricola, Prins, & Sluijsmans, 2020). Lande indicates that "Verbal feedback, it is better than written feedback" and suggested this was because both parties could respond to each other. The process of verbal feedback is likely to better enable parity of participation if students can participate in the feedback process with others as peers and equals. Verbal feedback then has the potential to create conditions for distribution of knowledge which can enable students to sustain their participation.

Chapter Three points out some of the challenges of written feedback. One of these problems is that students in general do not understand feedback. This study, unsurprisingly, made the same finding, and participants seemed to prefer verbal feedback, or a combination of written feedback with an opportunity to discuss this feedback in person. The literature also indicates that verbal feedback can strengthen written feedback (Brookhart, 2017). As Bourney indicates, "Verbal feedback explains if I did not understand written feedback, verbal feedback makes sense more than written feedback". Verbal feedback is commonly given after participants' assessments have been assessed and written feedback is given. Ideally, during verbal feedback sessions, participants can engage with the written feedback more critically and in a more focused way (Parkerson, 2000). Verbal feedback then can either enhance the learning that has already taken place or guide participants to adopt strategies that can strengthen their learning (Hill, Healey, West, & Déry, 2021).

Lande at first did not enjoy verbal feedback because as she says, "I was doubting myself because I felt like I will not be able to write a university assignment". Lande's participation in this study encouraged

her to overcome her shyness and eventually she verbalised her preference for verbal feedback. She then reflected forwards into the future to when she will be a qualified teacher and said, "I prefer verbal feedback especially with the foundation phase we are doing. I might write 'Good work' in a child's book, and they might not understand what it means. I feel that I need to explain [verbally] what I mean by saying 'Good work'". Lande, seemingly, is aware that when acknowledging learners' good work it is necessary to explain to her learners what this means and she suggests that this might be best unpacked verbally.

The literature suggests that accompanying written feedback with verbal feedback has the potential to increase students' self-efficacy (Mulliner & Tucker, 2017). Self-efficacy is associated with the confidence participants have in their abilities, and in taking control of their work as Lande said, "Feedback will boost me to do better than what I am [currently] capable of". Since verbal feedback is immediate, the self-efficacy of participants might be increased because they can establish immediately what needs to be done (Agricola et al., 2020). As Kgase indicated: "With verbal feedback I get a chance to ask questions. Whenever I ask for feedback, it is in the form of examples. I ask whoever is giving me feedback to give me an example. I work better with examples." As discussed in Chapter Three, feedback does not only reside with academics. There are other external sources of feedback or specific hermeneutical resources that participants can draw on to extend their feedback. The examples that Kgase is referring to can also serve as hermeneutical resources. Verbal feedback then demonstrates the Participatory Parity if those providing and receiving the feedback interact and recognise each other as peers, where they share knowledge and understanding with each other, and strengthen each other's participation.

The unequal epistemic and academic relationship of students and their lecturers is a given, however both students and lecturers can participate in verbal feedback in their capacity as knowers. Verbal feedback then maintains epistemic relations, pedagogic relations, and epistemic interactions, that enrich teaching and learning (Barnett, 2007; Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017). Therefore, verbal feedback, potentially becomes a place for testimonial exchange, argument, and reason, where collective interpretation and shared understanding is made. Verbal feedback represents a real-time hermeneutical resource. Verbal feedback also demonstrates the inferentiality model where evidence or inference is needed especially for participants to support their claims and argument (Fricker, 2003). In this respect, Kgase said:

> When my tutor gives me feedback verbally, I listen carefully because what they say is the same as what they wrote in the comments. Verbal feedback at that stage is more elaborate and there is a lot of engagement between myself and the tutor and I get a chance to ask questions.

While much of the data on feedback from tutors and peers and on opportunities to receive verbal feedback alongside written feedback was positive, there was data indicating that at time feedback could actually cause harm.

The epistemic harm of feedback

Since verbal feedback is ever-present and often forms part of a lecture, it can touch on specific contextualised cultural experiences. Sometimes the lecturer might be unknowingly focusing more on the experiences of some students that other students, in general, are not familiar with. Some students might then feel excluded and lose out on the value of verbal feedback. Bourney shared her experience where she felt excluded:

> It feels like we are here, the lecturers give us information. There is nothing, like some participants need to take it slow so that they can understand. Because I feel like the whole class understands and then the lecturers talk about something else [that other participants understand] that they read in the magazine and they [the lecturer] skips the slide while some of us [who do not have the same experiences or understanding] are still taking notes. We try to understand the concepts. A few who understand it's cool and the lecturer moves on.

Since verbal feedback is similar to having a conversation and ideally dialogical, and since students generally come from diverse contexts, verbal feedback can be structured in ways that welcome the views and ideas of others and that ensure that there is understanding by everyone. As discussed earlier, and in Chapter Two, verbal feedback can be an immediate hermeneutical resource where students and lecturers or tutors, in general, can share understanding, collectively interpret the assignment, and collectively make sense and meaning for themselves. Such feedback is inclusive and recognises that even though participants come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, they are knowers and can contribute much during verbal feedback sessions. Kgase gave a fitting description of such an open and inclusive exchange where she recounted on lecturer's approach:

> My lecturer just picks random people, and you say what you want to say, and she challenges you and asks you to make a statement [related to the topic] and she directs it to the class and opens it up for discussion and then brings it back. So, it's like her saying 'I want your feedback. I am commenting on your feedback, give it to the people so that they can also comment and give you feedback'.

While Kgase's experience here was one of inclusion, Bourney recounts generic verbal feedback which left some of the students confused while others were nodding in agreement and joining in and the lecturer then moved on to the next point. Jolly and Boud (2013:118) explain that participants might

not accept feedback if "they find it impersonal and if it is too generic and or vague". Such feedback, as Bourney said, can "make you lose that passion".

This study has argued that feedback could encourage participants to bring the knowledge, experiences and literacy practices they learned from their socio-cultural backgrounds and then make connections to the expectations of this new context. The related literacies that participants bring to the table can strengthen their taking on of academic literacies at university, but only if they are able to see similarities and differences, and only if the new practices are made explicit such that they can achieve epistemic access. Participants' diverse knowledge and experiences also can open the eyes of others who may not be familiar with such knowledge and experiences (Barnett, 2007). Bourney, for instance, said, "I was able to work with different people and a person has a different view in a particular topic and he has his views and I have my own view and it is a collaboration of views". Supposing diverse contextual contribution is encouraged while keeping the focus of feedback on making the expectations explicit, in that case, participants can create conditions for them to be recognised as knowers and create conditions for redistribution of knowledge. Feedback then has the potential to act as a space in which to build Participatory Parity. Kgase's comment demonstrated this norm:

> In the first lecture this morning, she [the lecturer] was explaining, and she made sure that everyone understands. She gives you the platform to ask questions and she will be like 'Guys, you must also ask questions.'

It was thus evident that there were some academics who were able to make dialogical spaces whereby feedback could enhance learning (and thereby redistribution of knowledge) and at the same time ensure recognition of the students as legitimate knowers.

"If only feedback could be clearer"

As indicated in Chapter Three, one of the most common complaints about feedback is that students generally do not understand it because it is unclear.

> We were creating rhymes - musical rhymes but mathematical rhymes. She [lecturer] say here I should have 'started at primary'. I didn't understand what she meant. We have been singing this song since we were little in primary school - Three little monkeys jumping on the bed. We were counting backward. We start from 10 and count down. I thought it was an appropriate song for foundation phase especially Grade R because they are still learning. They will learn how to count backward without realising that they are learning.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Lande used a rhyme she learned when she was still learning in primary school and wanted to use this rhyme to respond to the task. Unclear feedback, however, confused her,. Feedback created uncertainty as to whether participants' knowledge and experiences they brought to the task amounted to anything worthy. In Lande's case, she tried to use her past knowledge and experiences in the context of the assignment task, and she made "judgements about what is appropriate within the present situation and context, and [acted] on this basis" (Nieminen et al., 2021:5). Unfortunately, feedback failed to recognise Lande's judgment to use a rhyme she learned from primary school to respond to the task. Furthermore, Lande felt unable to seek an explanation from the lecturer as to what this comment meant because the assignments were simply returned marked and the students had already moved on to the next tasks.

Furthermore, it was clear from the data that feedback generally failed to indicate how much participants exerted themselves in response to the assignment task. Feedback then might lose its effectiveness, and Bourney's comment indicates how unclear feedback can be ineffective:

> When they say 'Describe'. In my opinion I described but then they say 'Describe'. I don't know how to describe further. I described as far as I know and when a person says 'Describe', what and how? I described what I understand in my own words. Tell me how to describe. I feel like I gave enough information, what other information can I give?

Carless and Boud, (2018) argue that students in general need to develop feedback literacies to enable them to understand feedback comments and use these appropriately in relevant circumstances. Bumblebee wished, "if feedback could be clearer". Unfortunately, feedback that is not clear will not encourage participants to develop their learning. Unclear feedback unintentionally does not recognise participants as knowers and as active epistemic agents who can use feedback (Dawson et al., 2018; Winstone et al., 2021). Lastly, unclear feedback can leave participants in the dark as Bourney said, "I don't know where I am at" and Bumblebee indicated, "You are totally blank".

While I have been here discussing limited and confusing feedback, there was also evidence in the data from all five participants of them getting no feedback at all on certain tasks.

"There is no feedback"

One of the most important findings in this study was that even though participants handed their assignment tasks for assessment, there were often cases in which there was no feedback. As indicated earlier, in some cases students received only a mark and had challenges trying to work on on what basis they achieved that mark. But in other cases, even the feedback in the form of a mark or a few ticks was missing.

> There was no feedback [on this task'. It is not helpful. Everything is hard and confusing because I don't know if I did good because you are not giving me feedback to improve myself. (Bourney)

Chapter Three discussed that when students develop their assignment task, they naturally generate internal feedback for themselves. When students get feedback they might demonstrate their agency and connect the external and internal feedback to make sophisticated decisions about their work. Students, as they are expected, might also take an active role in using feedback to attend to the task. In this regard, as discussed in Chapter Two, students rely on their ecological agency and socio-material resources (Nieminen et al., 2021). Unfortunately, entirely absent feedback will not activate these agential powers (Fricker, 2003, 2007). Furthermore, absent feedback might cause misrecognition, and testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice is likely to occur because participants are not sure if their assignment tasks were taken seriously. As Bumblebee said, "you wonder if they read it at all". Hermeneutical injustice is also likely to occur because participants might not understand the extent to which they correctly interpreted the assignment task and appropriately responded to what was required.

Students and lecturers are in intersubjective relationships, where epistemic and mutual recognition is meant to occur, as Kgase explains, when this occurs "Her feedback [the lecturer's feedback] is like a conversation with you, like she interacts with you in her comments". It seems that the participants saw feedback as personal messages from their lecturers. This meant they regarded feedback as a nurturing practice that can enrich their epistemic self-hood and self-confidence (Fricker, 2018). Sadly, absent feedback cannot enable these critical and necessary interrelationships, or meaningful interpersonal communication to develop.

Furthermore, when feedback is understood not just as correction of that particular piece but as a path that can lead to relevant hermeneutical resources, as discussed in Chapter Three, then the absence of feedback means students are not afforded access to this path. Instead, absent feedback is likely to solidify the harmful hermeneutical lacuna. Kgase's comment about a task where she got no feedback at all is an apt description of a hermeneutical lacuna experience: "You have no clue; you are lost with your brain. Your mind is blank".

This means the absence of feedback is limiting itself as a hermeneutical resource (Medina, 2017:41). Marsha described the danger of receiving no feedback on a couple of tasks in a row when she said, "You are just doing the same thing over and over. Doing the same mistakes over and over". Bourney also said, "It's like getting on a bus [hoping to get to where feedback is] and you don't know where you are going to. Then say 'Everyone get off' and that's it".

As discussed in Chapter One, my participants were learning to become teachers and key to such learning is modelling. The same principle applies to the practice of feedback. Bourney was frustrated when she did not get any feedback on an assignment task and she angrily said, "Well, it is up to them if they give it or not". Absence of feedback is not modelling and shaping the practice of feedback that participants might use one day. This means that students' novice status might not shift as time goes on. As Marsha said, "Nothing changes". In this respect Bumblebee focused on her future teacher self and commented strongly:

> I will not put my children on the blank side. I know feedback is important. Like if I had enough feedback on my assignments, I will know what to do or how to do more you see. So, I will be fair and tell them [my leaners] the truth like if they didn't do well, 'Oh, you didn't do well here.' Whatever it is, so that my learners can say 'Ok, I can see that my teacher is trying to talk about this whole thing'. Because if you are just going to leave me like with this blank thingy…it will not be fair.

Absence of feedback can cause testimonial injustice because the credibility of participants' assignment tasks and their credibility as novice teachers is at stake. As teachers who are learning the epistemic injustice, the harm of absent feedback, might, in Fricker's (2018:3) words: "track[s] them through different regions of the social world". Kgase also said, "If you don't get feedback you follow the wrong path for the rest of your degree. You don't know if something is right or it is wrong". This means absence of feedback was not preparing students for their future as practising teachers, and students might carry this deficit into their futures. There were examples in the data from all participants of assignment tasks which had not been returned to students or which had been completed but then not required to be submitted. The developing epistemic status and epistemic agency of participants might be compromised, negatively affecting their epistemic self-respect.

Bengtsen and Barnett (2017) argued that the process of learning is never easy. Learning is a challenge for many. The ethic of care (Tronto 1989) needs to be held in balance with the pedagogy of discomfort (Boler 1999), as will be discussed in more detail later. The participants' experiences of feedback indicate how challenging learning was for them. In the true sense, the "learning process might be unpleasant and cause discomfort to take a leap forward not knowing the risks on the way or the final destination" (Bengtsen & Barnett, 2017: 123). The calls by the participants for feedback should not be seen as calls for an avoidance of such discomfort and challenge. They all indicated an awareness that learning often entailed letting go and falling into the unknown.

Figure 17: Nomfundo Siqwede goes bridge jumping[23]

Conclusion

The five participants needed the feedback they received to recognise them as people and their endeavours in the task and to show them how they made sense and made meaning for themselves. Well-designed rubrics could be a means for them to establish where they had done well or not, though often rubrics were to generic to be particularly meaningful. The participants enjoyed opportunities for dialogical feedback, which was often possible in feedback from tutors and peers.

They expected that at times feedback would be challenging and serve to point out their misunderstandings and shortcomings. They needed feedback to be a hermeneutical resource to strengthen the meaning they tried to make for themselves. Participants wished for feedback that could nurture them and prepare them for future assignment tasks and their future feedback practice as qualified teachers, as Lande said, "I am not there yet. I am still learning". Unfortunately, unclear and absent feedback did not create conditions for the distribution of knowledge that participants needed. All this suggests that unclear and absent feedback might not make the norms of the field of study or the specific task explicit for participants.

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[23] In this picture, my friend and Rhodes University CHERTL administrator, Nomfundo Siqwede, is jumping with both fear and excitement but relies on the bungee rope attaching her to safety. I think feedback is one pedagogic practice that can create a safety net (or 'bungee rope') for participants as they take up the challenge of learning, which always entails a degree of discomfort.

Chapter Seven: Feedback as Punishment and Developing Feedback Literacies

Wrong! Do it again
Wrong! Do it again
If you don't eat your meat, you can't have any pudding
How can you have any pudding if you don't eat your meat?
You! Yes, you behind the bike shed
Stand still, laddie

'Another Brick in the Wall'
By Pink Floyd
From the Album *The Wall* (1979)

Bourney's Story

Bourney was a first-year student when we met for the first time. She is a reflective and pleasant person to be around: "I'm a people's person. I get along well with people. I love communicating". Bourney comes from one of the most vibrant townships[24] and her deeply embedded South African roots inspire her creative fashion sense and hairstyles. Bourney has a grounded sense of self which developed through a female-headed upbringing, and she indicates that "The support system was always there". The women who contributed significantly to Bourney's upbringing were her mother, her maternal aunt, and her maternal grandmother. Bourney's mother passed away when Bourney was at a young age. Her father took another wife and lives in another part of the township. Bourney was raised by her maternal grandmother, Mosidi, and her maternal aunt, Grace. Grace inspired Bourney in many ways: "My aunt prepared me for university", so much so that Bourney is studying at the same university where her aunt studied. Bourney's maternal grandmother, Mosidi, whom Bourney loves deeply, contributed much to her upbringing: "Everything that was done for me was my grandmother. There was just the three of us". Each time I had conversations with Bourney, I noticed how her face lit up and how her voice sounded with joy and love when she mentioned these women or whenever a thought about the most influential women in her life crossed her mind.

Bourney's family adhere to the Anglican faith, and she explained that "going to church is important in my family". Bourney is deeply religious and strongly believes that "I cannot fight anything without prayer. I have to have that side in me so that I can fight things. Sometimes you can't fight battles if you don't have faith. You need the religious side to fight for you". Even though Bourney's grandmother is committed to her Anglican faith, she enrolled Bourney at the local township girls-only Catholic school. "I was accepted [in the Catholic school] because I come from a Christian family and there are

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[24] 'Townships' is the term used for suburbs which were designated for black people only under apartheid.

similarities in the Anglican and Catholic faiths". Bourney's grandmother cherished the values and the ways of being that the Catholic faith promoted and wished for Bourney to embody such values. The Catholic school also contributed to Bourney's faith in God, and her strong spiritual sense of being. It was clear that her family of women were proud of her and that she was grateful for what they had helped to achieve. Bourney happily commented that, "I passed Matric and I am a university education student now".

Bourney wanted to be a foundation phase teacher from a young age: "I love being around children". To satisfy this love for children, Bourney related in the second year of studies that she had "enrolled at a community engagement organisation where you offer skills, like you can teach children how to write or you just add on the information that they have". After Bourney obtains her education degree in the foundation phase level, she plans to "teach for a while and get experience so that I can understand how children learn and how to teach them. Thereafter, I want to study to become a clinical psychologist. I like working with children in a different form".

While Bourney enjoyed her time in high school, she was not aware of how feedback contributed to her pedagogic development. My conversations with Bourney about feedback made her think back to her high school feedback moments, and she reflectively realised: "Is this what my teachers were doing then?" She laughed and said: "I must have improved after all the nagging". She also reflected that: "In high school, I used to talk to my teachers about my work because it was their job to nag me and make me pass. I really didn't care what they were doing." Bourney's schooling background shows that feedback played a crucial role in her learning as she confirms that, "I guess it is a way of improving myself".

Developing Feedback Literacy

It was clear that Bourney was mostly unaware of the purpose of feedback or even that many of her encounters with teachers at school constituted feedback. Reflecting on feedback at university, Bourney indicated that, "Feedback could be in terms of punishment because you did something wrong, and you get punished for it."

Bourney, Bumblebee, Lande, and Kgase did not know, or they were not aware of, how feedback played a significant role in their learning. However their reflections during our conversations suggest that their feedback experiences from school were nonetheless very influential. This was not the case with Marsha whose schooling experiences were often dysfunctional and who was clear that she rarely received feedback in high school.

Looking back, Bourney admitted that "At that time I took feedback very lightly. But it was not as important as it is now. It was like the teacher is there and she will explain again, or if I don't understand something I'll just go to the teacher, and they'll give me answers". Although Bourney's story indicates that her high school experience was enriching, feedback for Bourney was an elusive experience and did not have a name. Bourney also did not know that the feedback she got in high school enriched her learning experiences and pedagogic development. In the small classes of high school, where she enjoyed positive relationships with her teachers, she was able to rely on her interactions to make sense of expectations. But it was clear from her narrative that in university this was not feasible.

Burke, explains that students, especially students in the first year of study, often interpret feedback literally and as corrections to be made on a single task and they do not understand the potential of feedback to "feed-forward and contribute to their ongoing development" (Burke, 2009:41). It would seem that at times the participants could not use feedback meaningfully because they had not been guided in the purpose of feedback. At other times, the feedback was unclear, confusing or absent, ot did not explicitly guide them, encourage or motivate them to take particular and meaningful learning actions (Burke, 2009;). As discussed in Chapter Three, feedback is often simply corrective that only attends to surface learning or single loop and does not influence learning in the long-term. If students do not understand the pedagogic role of feedback, they can ignore it, much to the frustration of the lecturer who has spent time providing it. And if the nature of the feedback does not make sense to them or engage them dialogically and show them that there are other creative possiblities of approaching learning, then it is unlikely to fulfil its potential (Carless, 2020; Smith,2021).

Despite a growing awareness that feedback had been a key part of her school successes, Bourney indicated that in her experience, feedback is usually focused on correcting that particular piece of work, and indicated that it often felt like a punishment, albeit "a punishment that does not physically hurt you." Other participants also referred to feedback as punishment and as mainly or only serving to draw their attention to work that was incorrect. Bumblebee said: "Feedback is all about what you did wrong". Bumblebee further added that "lecturers or teachers normally give you feedback when you have done bad and when you have done good, they don't give you feedback". On the few occasions when she did get feedback, Marsha thought that "There is something that I have done wrong.".

A pedagogic practice like feedback needs to yield formative and progressive results and according to Boud and Molloy (2012; 2013), this means feedback needs to operate progressively and resemble a continuum . As discussed in Chapter Three, feedback needs to encourage participants to look back at the aspects of learning that need attention, encourage them to adopt strategies that can move them

forward by identifying those aspects and acting on them through the help of feedback (Shute, 2007). In this understanding, feedback then does not only point out what participants cannot do or where they went wrong. Feedback is looking at what happened in the past and what participants can do to avoid being caught in a hermeneutical lacuna. According to an English idiom, if participants are in a vicious cycle, they are 'in a situation in which the solution to one problem becomes the cause of another, and the solution to that one causes the first problem to occur'.

Feedback, as discussed in Chapter Three, is an ipsative process and such feedback requires participants to look back, identify, and work on aspects that need their attention to make a positive revision of the next draft. Participants can also see for themselves by comparing the first and second drafts if feedback encouraged them to take appropriate actions. This comparison is possible if participants are able to submit multiple drafts and make these evaluations. The figure below is a visual representation of the iterative process of feedback. This illustration does not suggest that feedback tells participants what to do or to correct their work. Instead this illustration promotes feedback that develops participants' capacities to use feedback and identify for themselves how they can enhance their work through multiple forms of feedback. However, these forms of feedback need to be created, planned in line with the curriculum, and made accessible to participants.
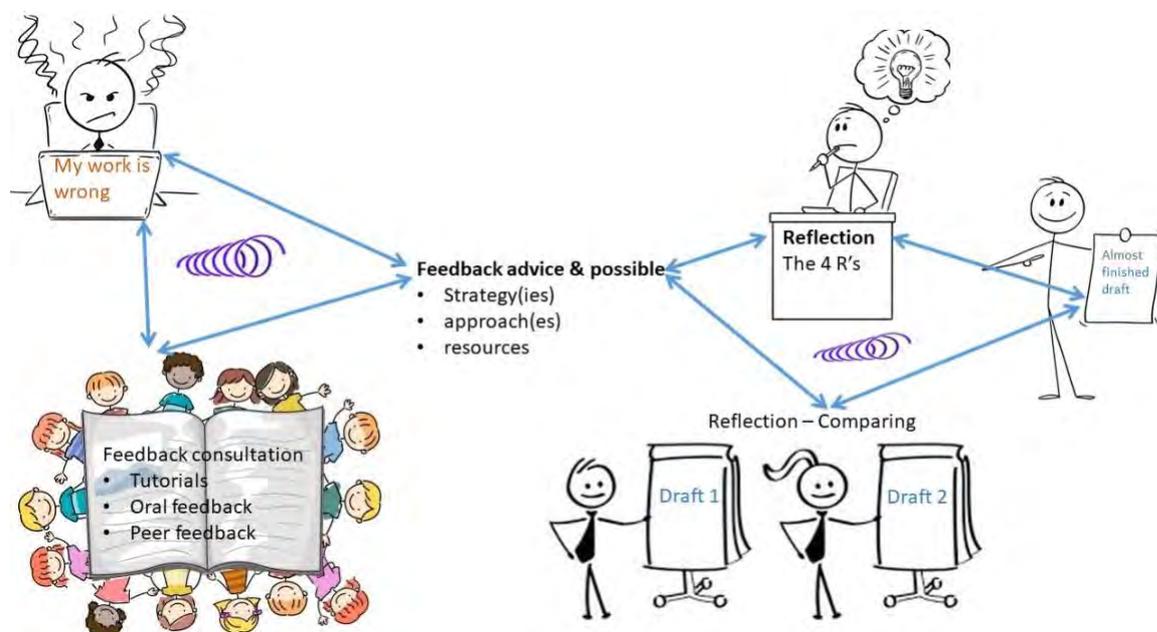

Figure 18: An illustration of the iterative process of feedback

The illustration above also shows that university-level participants need to navigate between the forms of feedback that might be given (see Smith, 2021). Participants then can be able to take note of what is expected, compare their work against feedback and take action to reconcile their work with the expectations and the feedback that is given. The spiral shown in the illustration indicates the complexities of navigating the learning space to satisfy the expectations of the assignment and to enact the literacy practices that the assignment entails. Feedback need not necessarily give participants answers, but rather needs to enable participants to navigate the feedback in a form of spirals. These spirals demonstrate that learning takes place through building-blocks with iterative movement between levels of reflection. Spirals, in particular, indicate that the more participants navigate through feedback, the more learning takes place. If participants get lost and fail to navigate the spirals of feedback then the feedback itself needs to be examined to determine if it carries the elements that make participants navigate it with intent and for an explicit purpose (Boud & Molloy, 2013). However all this can only be possible if participants are taught how to use feedback. Participants also need to understand that feedback at university is concerned with guidance, advice, and leading to spaces where participants can make sense and meaning for themselves.

Bourney, Bumblebee, and Marsha's understandings of feedback seemed at times to be associated with fear and punishment, although this did seem to vary depending on the teacher, lecturer or course they were reflecting upon. Although Bourney demonstrated a level of maturity and indicated that she knew she needed to take this 'punishment' and use it to focus on improvements, there are concerns about this notion of feedback as being about punishment and only focused on errors.

If students understand feedback in ways that elicit only negative emotions, it might cause students to become demotivated and fail to use feedback to improve their work. This understanding is particularly worrisome for students who do not have the maturity level that Bourney had. Margaret Wetherell (2012), a psychologist, categorised, among others, emotions of doubt, fear, frustration, and anger as 'ordinary emotions'. Even though Wetherell categorised these emotions as such, she argued that these emotions are important because they form one layer of many layers of human existence and emotions are a key part of our process of making meaning. She argues that the embodied nature of emotions means they can enable or constrain meaning-making.

Shields (2015) published a research study which explored the emotional responses that feedback generated. Shields found that the impact of feedback was related to students' prior experiences of feedback, which might encourage students to engage or might prevent students from engaging with feedback. The problem that Shields identified was that students might not know how to differentiate between "getting it wrong" and "being wrong" (Shields, 2015: 620). Hence there is possibility that

participants might experience feedback as a personal affront. Feedback does indeed have the potential to make an emotional impact on students because it generates an emotional backwash (Pitt & Norton, 2017). This has far-reaching consequences because unless students in general are inducted into feedback literacies, as discussed earlier, they may be unable to navigate the emotional aspects of the practice.

Winstone et al. (2020) support the idea of developing feedback literacies as a part of the graduate attributes that students need to succeed in their studies and beyond. Their study showed that students who develop feedback literacies can make valuable judgments which translate into lifelong learning efforts. Malecka et al. (2020) explain that students who are 'feedback literate' are able to appreciate and respond to feedback by acting on it iteratively and reflectively in a sophisticated manner. Feedback literacy would thus entail the development of the four levels of reflection discussed in Chapter Three. Dawson, Carless and Lee (2021) propose that developing feedback literacies needs to include challenging students cognitively such that they can solve disciplinary and work-related problems. Such challenges would take away the tendency to require students to simply reproduce knowledge through feedback focused on correction. Instead, feedback would require students to demonstrate complex thinking, and an ability to make decisions and solve problems. Such feedback rarely tells students what to do, instead it requires students to make choices with regard to a particular learning aspect, and come to understand the contextual basis on which they can make such choices. This approach to feedback has the potential to activate students' agency, stimulate internal feedback, and encourage students to step out and seek related feedback resources independently of the academic's feedback.

Winstone et al. (2020) further recommend that feedback needs to focus on discipline-specific literacy practices to translate the norms and values of the field and assist students in interpreting these. If the feedback is aligned with the curriculum, students are able to start to see the role of feedback in their learning, appreciate feedback, and act on feedback appropriately. Developing feedback literacies also suggests that feedback needs to align with assessment practices and assessment opportunities. Feedback literacies then puts feedback at the centre of who students are becoming as they take on the literacy practices of their disciplines. If students develop feedback literacies, they can be prepared for their roles as graduates (Dawson et al., 2021). If feedback can achieve all this, it would be demonstrating the moral ethic of responsiveness. In Bourney's story, much as with her fellow participants, she had limited feedback literacy and it was only through the engagement with my study that she came to realise the depth of feedback in pedagogy.

The data suggest that on the whole all of my participants did not consider feedback as being about developing their capacity to make sound judgments for themselves, but rather saw feedback as being corrective and even as punishment for poor assessment behaviour. Carless (2020:3) reiterates that "it is insufficient for students to rely upon evaluative judgments made by the teacher". Where academics are literate as regards the roles of feedback and where students are supported to develop feedback literacies, then the students are able to participate and contribute in critical discussions beyond learning at university. Such students are emotionally ready to engage with feedback that might be uncomfortable for them and such academics would be aware of the extent to which feedback can be an emotionally charged activity. Dawson et al. (2021) argue that even though feedback can challenge students emotionally, feedback that is sensitively challenging can prepare students for the realities of life beyond the university. Feedback as part of a human communication process, can be as fluid and subjective as human beings are. Students then have to develop resilience and rise above the emotional constraints so that they can focus on what feedback can do for them as novices who are soon to enter the practices of the discipline of their choice.

Feedback as part of a Pedagogy of Discomfort

Assignment tasks potentially place students in a vulnerable position because they open students to the lecturers' scrutiny and as discussed in Chapter Three, this often entails affective responses. The students' vulnerability can create anxiety, uncertainty, and discomfort – as Bourney said, with some degree of concern and confusion: "This assignment was difficult. I was not sure what this assignment wanted". Feelings of uncertainty emerged often in the data. Zembylas (2015) indicates that because learning is challenging in multiple ways, including challenging one intellectually, emotionally, and socially, it often entails discomfort. Boler's (1999) concept of a 'pedagogy of discomfort' is useful here because learning entails taking on ways of being and taking on literacy practices can entail taking on new roles (Gee, 1999). While we need to ensure that teaching is undertaken with a careful ethic of care (as discussed in Chapter Three), this does not mean that learning will be 'easy' or comfortable.

Pedagogic discomfort is necessary and should be expected throughout the learning process because it is a necessary condition for learning to occur (Zembylas, 2015; 2017). However, it seemed to be the case that in many instances the discomfort experienced by the participants was one of uncertainty as to what was expected, rather than the discomfort of engaging with new ideas or complex problems. Because the participants had little feedback literacy, there was little understanding of feedback as challenging them to engage or as fostering their own agency, as one would expect in a pedagogy of discomfort. Rather there was an understanding that feedback was only for the purposes of correction. This cannot be seen to have emerged in the data only from the participants' lack of feedback literacy,

but also because much of the feedback they received was paltry and was indeed focused on correction, as indicated in the previous findings chapters.

Barnett (2007: 34) indicates that "the idea of higher education calls upon students to come to their own interpretations, judgements and arguments. They are required to exert their own agency. They are examined on their own accounts. This is an idea of higher education that celebrates not just human beings but each human being as such". Such a conception was however largely absent in the data collected in this study. Feedback should ideally recognise how students use their fledgling knowledge to enact and interpret the expectations of the assessment and it should challenge them to engage with new ideas. It should support and strengthen students as they learn and validate each student's understanding and experience that they bring to the assignment. However, I generally did not find such understandings in my conversations with the participants or evidence of such feedback in the examples they shared with me.

Feedback needs to go beyond its corrective role, especially at university level, in an epistemic space where dialogical exchanges could allow for deeper engagement with meaning-making. Feedback needs to concern itself with encouraging students to take part in the process of making sense and meanings for themselves.

Feedback: Pedagogical, Epistemic and Ontological Settings

Bourney asks: "I have given the knowledge that I can, what more can I give?" Barnett (2007) argued that students need to develop an epistemic and ontological voice. An epistemic voice represents students' intellectual formation as they make sense of the knowledge in the field of study or practice. An ontological voice represents their becoming as the knowledge practices affect their identities. In their epistemic voice, students demonstrate an intellectual formation by offering their interpretation of the assignment tasks. The assignments that students write where they demonstrate this intellectual formation, are going to be judged to see if students meet the outcomes and expectations of the task. Student assignments are tangible products that are weighed and measured to determine the performance of students. Students' intellectual formation shows when they respond to pedagogic activities, such as written assignments. Student's intellectual formation emerges when students interpret the assignment task. Students then enact their understanding of the expectations, of the relevant knowledge and of the appropriate literacy practices though their assignment tasks. Students, therefore, do not only offer assignments as products that satisfy the assignment expectations, the

lecturer's expectation, and the curriculum requirements, they bring themselves into the assignment. An assignment is thus not only an epistemic act; it has ontological implications (Barnett, 2007).

To ensure that feedback helps participants to develop an epistemic and an ontological voice, feedback needs to consider the three most important components of the pedagogical and epistemic setting (Barnett, 2007). These components are: the putting forward of the participants themselves; their continuing efforts sustained over time or praxis; and the material entity which is the assignment product. These components need to feature in the feedback process. The figure below is a visual representation of the triple structure that shows the different components that students bring to the pedagogical and epistemic setting.
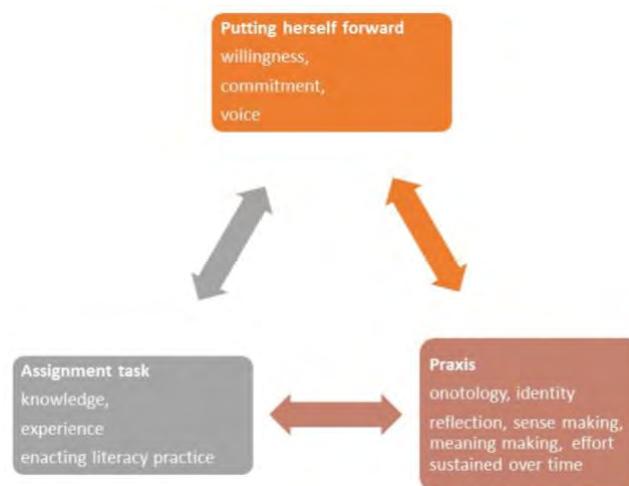
Figure 19: Self-praxis-materiality cycle (Based on Barnett, 2007)

The feedback that only focuses on certain aspects of students' work can create conflict, and confusion, and interrupt the flow of the self-praxis-materiality cycle that needs to take place within a pedagogical and epistemic setting. Feedback that focuses only on the incorrect parts of students' work, as discussed in Chapter Five, and does not help students to "see what I missed last time", as Marsha put it, can promote an understanding that all students need to do is to present a product that meets the technical requirements of formatting, structure, and surface-level correctness. Such feedback ignores the reality that students bring themselves into the assignment; they bring the voice they are trying to exercise; and the identity they are trying to develop; as well as their demonstration of an understanding of norms of the field; and how they made sense of the practices required of them for that particular task. Drawing on Barnett (2007), such feedback breaks the self-praxis-material cycle that needs to take place within the pedagogical and epistemic settings

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Within the pedagogical and epistemic settings, lecturers and students exchange roles of being speakers and hearers. Students, as discussed in Chapter Two, are primarily speakers within pedagogical and epistemic settings. At some point, students can also become hearers, such as where they consider feedback about their assignments. Students then can decide how they might use the feedback to enhance their work, provided they are given a chance to do so. Lande gave an example of this when she wished that she could use the feedback to improve her engagement with that task, "I can go back to the assignment and improve it". This shows that students have the capacity to identify for themselves where their flaws are and what steps to take to attend to those aspects that need attention if they are supported to do so. This is a step towards developing feedback literacies. Participants also demonstrated a readiness to make sense of the content and the peculiar literacy practices required of them. In this case, the simple feedback comment in the margin 'Why?' was useful to Lande as she was able to identify that she needed to expand that particular point and provide a reason for her claim. In line with the developing feedback literacies, as discussed earlier, participants demonstrated the dimension of appreciating feedback, making a judgement and managing their affects or emotions.

Unfortunately, feedback that focuses only on the errors in students' work does not always indicate to students how to improve, as Marsha said, discussing the feedback she had just received, "I don't know where to pull up my socks". Feedback that does not guide students on what to focus on can miss the opportunity to enable students to make sense of the expectations of the course or field of study. In this regard, Marsha poignantly indicated that the limited feedback meant she was likely to simply repeat her errors. Feedback needs to direct students to what they do not know yet, and to what is possible to know. As Lande indicated, dialogical feedback could enable her to a deeper understanding of the content and could even "boost me to do better".

As discussed in Chapter Two, feedback needs to open up possibilities for students to not only participate with parity in the knowledge environment, but should also open up spaces for students to connect these to their prior learning, and even to challenge the expectations being placed on them. Students can do this by drawing from their social and cultural backgrounds to make a connection with the practices of the academy. If feedback enables students to make these connections, then students' existing practices can strengthen new academic practices that students are in the process of taking on. They can also begin to see why and how knowledge is made in their fields and the specific literacy practices used to share that knowledge, and when this is made explicit to them they may begin to challenge some of the norms in their disciplines and in the university. To do this, students need to be supported to develop their voice and to make sense and meaning of the practices in their courses.

Students' ontological voice can emerge if feedback encourages students to develop a willingness to learn beyond the work that they present. As Barnett (2007: 97) confirmed, "Both intellectual and the human moments of teaching have to be present and continually so. Neither can go on holiday." Feedback, therefore, needs to demonstrate the responsibility to make expectations explicit to students and also to call on students to take responsibility for their learning. Students can then discover for themselves who they are becoming during the process of learning. Feedback that is punitive or unclear might fail to support students as they develop epistemically and ontologically (Quinn, Ganas, Olsen, Vorster, & Behari-Leak, 2019; Sutton, 2012).

It seemed to me through conversations with the participants that they were willing and committed to the curriculum process and showed courage by opening themselves to critique. But this process was fraught with anxiety. For example, Lande nervously says, "I doubted myself. I felt like I will not be able to write a university assignment". As Barnett (2007: 85) says, "the censures strike deeply into the student's being". Thus, participants needed courage to take on the assignment tasks.

In order to understand this notion of courage, which can be stamped out by problematic feedback at university, I now turn to Lande's story. As with the others, many of the past experiences Lande shared with me were not directly related to feedback. Lande's experiences allow us to glimpse into how she related to education generally and later to feedback in particular. Lande's story demonstrates how feedback can help students to build courage and overcome doubts so that they can keep their end of the educational compact by submitting their assignments as evidence of their developing meaning-making abilities.

Lande's story

Lande is the youngest in her family and she has two sons. Her family valued education and she was sent to a privileged girls-only schools. She took a gap-year after Matric and worked at a day care centre to try and figure out what she wanted to do with her life. Lande knew then that she wanted to be a foundation phase teacher one day. The money that she earned was not enough and so she took a job at a garage as a cashier. Lande is reserved and talked very little unless prompted by me to share what was on her mind. She is independent and self-sufficient. She prefers to figure things out for herself first, behind the scenes, as she said,

> I prefer to study on my own. I write my own notes. Find myself first – I don't do group work unless I have studied first. I cannot talk about something that I don't understand myself. Then I can go for group discussion, and I always learn more from others.

Lande could not clearly describe to me what feedback was like in high school; that there was something called feedback never really occurred to her. She said, "I never took notice of it then. My view or understanding of feedback changed when you came". As was often the case, the conversations I had with my five participants became a fruitful space to discuss the role of feedback and inevitably had an effect on their understandings of feedback and how they might elect to use it as part of their future practice as teachers.

In high school, Lande indicated that teachers' comments comprised only of remarks like, "You did well" and all she needed to do was to make corrections on the answers that she got wrong. Looking back then, feedback in Lande's experience meant making corrections in class with the help of the corrections indicated by the teacher. This was Lande's perception of feedback from primary school through to matric. She used these corrections as part of revision when she prepared for tests and class exercises, especially in maths.

She explained that the most common form of feedback that she got was a mark, even in the case of essays. She expressed uncertainty as to how the mark was arrived at or how she could make changes to her writing practices to improve the marks she received. Lande related an incident where she especially could not understand why she got a low percentage as the task was to write about herself. She remarked, "This is my life story and I have a right to present it as I see fit, yet I get a low mark. … so why did I get this 20 out of 30? This is a story about myself." Lande indicated that now that she thinks about the feedback she received at school, the reason she got that mark was never communicated to her. She went on to reflect that this situation of being unclear what is valued in the assessment has continued to be the case at university. Lande's experience of feedback in this case, indicates that for feedback to be useful, it would not just be concerned with marks but be a developmental process that includes a variety of aspects she needs to develop. In the case of her life story, the feedback in the form of the mark could perhaps have been focused on Lande's competency to write.

Academics need feedback literacy too

van Heerden et al. (2016:974-975) argue that it is challenging for tutors and lecturers who "struggle to articulate clearly what makes student writing successful, what counts as legitimate forms of knowledge and how to demonstrate knowledge through writing". It is also difficult to separate corrective feedback from developmental feedback. Although the participants have a literal understanding of feedback, Lande, and as discussed in Chapter Five, did have a sense that there is more to feedback than correction and the awarding of marks. Lande might not know why, but she understood that she needed to express her life story through writing and that the feedback she

received had failed to achieve its developmental aspect. As van Heerden et al. (2016) point out, feedback might not encourage participants to be the right kind of knower and also might not encourage them to be the right kind of writers. This means there is a hermeneutical lacuna that exists between feedback as implemented and feedback as a developmental practice. This analysis, and drawing from Chapters Five and Six, raises an understanding that feedback has multiple elements and purposes and students and lecturers need to reflect on which is most appropriate at that timee. While it might be difficult to draw clear lines between these elements, it might be important to consider these in developing feedback literacies. Feedback is a pedagogic practice, a developmental practice, an ontological practice, a corrective practice, a reflective and a caring practice.
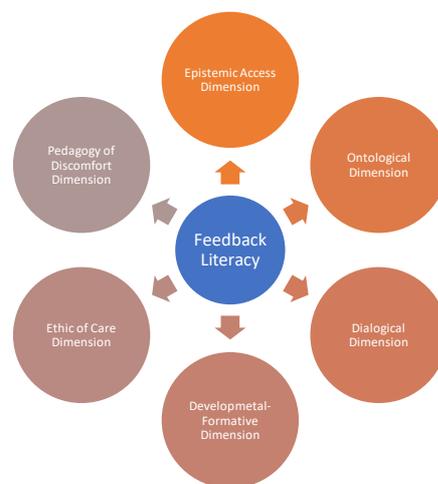

Figure 20: Some of the dimensions that comprise feedback literacy

Lande indicated that a frequent comment that she received at university was "Look at your grammar" as was reported by other participants, and as discussed in Chapter Five. Lande realised through her conversations with me that "I need feedback. I never took notice of feedback – even last year. But I always asked myself what I did wrong". Lande came to an understanding that feedback could play an important role in her learning. Although she spoke much about what she did wrong, asking herself "Where did I go wrong? Why is my mark so low?", her understanding of feedback was deepening and she indicated that perhaps the reason why she was so unsure of her strengths and weaknesses was "because I didn't get enough feedback".

Students can be feedback literate if they read, interpret, and use feedback by acting on it and taking the necessary actions to enhance their work. Participants also need to be able to make sense and make meaning of the feedback they receive (Carless & Boud, 2018; Han & Xu, 2021). Carless and Boud (2018) further explain that participants and students in general need to demonstrate appreciation of feedback by understanding the role of feedback, playing their role in the feedback process, accepting different forms of feedback, and saving and revisiting their feedback on a regular basis. Appreciating

feedback is similar to the moral element of responsibility, referred to be Bozalek et al. (2016), whereby students need to be willing to learn and to use feedback to strengthen their work. Students need to be ready to make use of feedback to make evaluative judgments of their work and the work of others in peer review settings (Joughin, Boud, & Dawson, 2019; Pandanero, Broadbent, Boud, & Lodge, 2019). Students who are feedback literate are able to better manage their emotions if they share with their lecturers an understanding of feedback as pedagogical, they can become less defensive, and demonstrate preparedness to show continuous improvement by relying on internal feedback and external feedback. Students need to be ready to take decisive decisions and take the necessary actions that can enhance their work. The figure below is adapted from Carless and Boud (2018) and demonstates the interplay between the characteristices of feedback literacy and shows that developing feedback literacy is not a once-off activity. Developing feedback literaces is a process that develops over time. Developing student feedback literacies cannot occur unless academics also develop feedback literacies so that students and academics both engage with this complex pedagogical process with a shared understanding of its multiple dimensions. Feedback literacies for academcis can help them to manage the barriers that often prevent students in general from using feedback, as discussed in Chapter Three (Carless & Winstone, 2020).
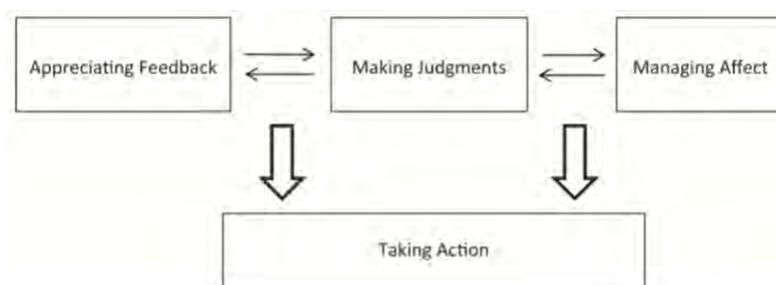
Figure 21: Features of student feedback: Adapted from Carless and Boud (2018)

Another realisation came to Lande when she said, "I never went to a lecturer. I kept it to myself because I don't ask things. I always think to myself that I'll do better next time". Things were soon to change for Lande:

> Since you came to talk to us about feedback, I find that I ask more questions. If there is a comment that I don't understand I ask 'Why? I don't understand. What do you mean?' I need an explanation of where things went wrong. We just got back an assignment. The rubric that they use – all the ticks … the ticks suggested that she [a friend] did everything right but she got 60%. Why didn't she get 100% because everything she did was correct? I encouraged her to go and ask 'Why?' I needed to know because we create rubrics to reflect why a child got an

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excellent mark or why they got a poor mark. If we are expected to explain it [as novice teachers], why can't a lecturer do the same? When I need explanations from the lecturer, I now ask them immediately after the lecture; I don't set up appointments. I don't get sufficient answers from lecturers but at least it is a pathway to bettering my marks.

The more I saw Lande, the more her understandings of and expectations about feedback changed. About a year into our research relationship, Lande said, "Feedback is a shining light. It is information that shows either you are on the right path, or something is wrong somewhere or you are somewhere in between. Feedback for me is a direction to where I want to be." Despite starting to develop feedback literacy and to demand more detailed guidance through feedback, Lande lamented, "But here at university, not all lecturers interact with us". She indicated that she wished for feedback to be more conversational and for her lecturers to interact with her more. Participants' comments indicate that there is a need for participants and students in general to develop feedback literacies as discussed earlier. However, the task of students to develop feedback literacies does not rest with them only. Academics also need to develop feedback literacies (Carless & Winstone, 2020).

Although this study did not focus on academics, it is necessary to reflect on the reasons for academics to develop feedback literacies. Carless and Winstone (2020) explain that feedback literacies for academics have three dimensions, which are: design, relational, and a pragmatic dimension. The design dimension includes feedback that encourages students to use it. Lande, for instance, reflected that feedback comments such as "You didn't understand correctly" were not helpful. She needed her teachers to communicate openly with her and raise their concerns about her work. She wanted feedback which would allow her to engage in her own meaning-making and thereby develop agency. This study proposed in earlier chapters that feedback that students can use is such that it could require them to draw from their related knowledge and experiences they learned from their socio-cultural and contextual backgrounds. These are authentic experiences that can encourage participants to act on and use feedback meaningfully. Such feedback can also challenge participants cognitively and expect them to engage in situations where they need to make comparisons, recommend problem-solving solutions, and make informed decisions (Dawson, Carless , & Pui Wah Lee, 2021). As discussed in Chapter Three, such feedback can encourage participants to reflect at the level of relating, reasoning, and reconstruction.

Secondly, the relational dimension includes feedback that demonstrates support and forms of affect and sensitivities that often emerge in the feedback process. Dawson et al. (2021) propose that students in general, especially in their first-year of study, could be prepared for affective challenges by setting up scaffolds to support them in cases where feedback communicaiton is emotionally

challenging. Dawson et al. (2021: 289) argue that it is important for participants to recognise "the fluid and subjective nature of human communication, (and) lifelong learners need to develop resilience to handle the contextually dependent affective challenges of feedback". In this regard, Lande indicated that she wanted a dialogue and seemed not to worry even if this included many negative comments, suggesting a wish for feedback comments along the lines of: "I don't understand your point here. You are confusing me. You didn't analyse properly". According to Lande, such comments would be easy for her to comprehend and respond to. Lande is sure that such comments would make her realise that "I missed something here or this paragraph does not link to the previous one, my linking is not correct. I need to look at my work more, I need to analyse this for myself'". According to Lande, "feedback can also show you your own understanding – whether you understand the work that you have been doing."

Lastly, the pragmatic approach includes the forms or the roles of feedback such as the pedagogic role, the ontological role, the dialogical role, the developmental and formative roles, the ethics of caring, and the social role of feedback as shown in the figure above. As our relationship developed and we had the opportunity to reflect on feedback more and more, so Lande developed a clear sense of what feedback she would like and how it would assist her in succeeding in her studies.

If I was in your shoes

There were moments where Lande put herself in her lecturer's shoes. She showed me her assignments, and imagined that she was assessing the work that she presented and commented on a piece where she acknowledged that she had not put in enough effort:

> If I was a lecturer, would I understand this work i.e., my own work? I know there are moments when I don't proofread. I just hand it in. So, I can't complain if the lecturer says they don't understand my point – it's because I didn't proofread my work before I submit. I know that I did this to myself. I didn't put enough effort to get the marks that I want.

It seemed like Lande grew to understand that successful feedback emerges from both the lecturer and the student. Even as she began to articulate the kind of dialogical feedback that she desired, she also began to take responsibility for much of the feedback that she got. She acknowledged that if she engaged with the assignment sufficiently, then she would be more likely to get meaningful feedback. She concluded, "So, if I proofread and I get comments then I know there is something wrong I made a mistake somewhere". As discussed in Chapter Three, Lande's comments demonstrate the moral elements of attentiveness and she shows that she cares about the academic who must read her work and make sense of her intentions. Lande also demonstrates a moral element of caregiving and she

shows an intention to develop feedback literacies that can in turn assist academics to give feedback that corresponds to her needs, the needs of other participants, and students in general (Tronto 1989; 2010; Zembylas et al., 2014).

Lande indicated that she prefers verbal feedback, but she also understood that there are many students that her lecturers must deal with, and individual interaction would always not be possible. Even though she understands such constraints, she indicated that she would have benefitted from a deeper, more personal engagement, when she says, "I feel let down. It's like I can't do better. I feel like it's left up to me to do better. Yes, it is up to me, but some encouragement is needed from the lecturers. I don't feel encouraged."

Lande is a very considerate person and she often indicated that she had a role to play in which she was beginning to see as less-than-ideal feedback experiences at university, when she commented, "Sometimes it's me who does not understand". But she was also increasingly able to articulate that the problem lay not only on her side: "Sometimes it's the lecturers not explaining in ways that can make me understand. Or maybe they explain correctly, and I just find it hard to understand." While Lande was happy to take responsibility for her side of the academic compact both as regards proofreading her assignments before submitting them and in engaging with the feedback to make sense of it, she seemed concerned that feedback was often unclear to her. The issue of unclear feedback is discussed in detail in Chapter Six. As discussed earlier, she indicated that it felt at times that it was punitive and focused on correction, and at others, it provided insufficient detail for her to understand. On this latter point, she was clear that it was not a linguistic issue causing her to battle with understanding the feedback, when she commented, "It cannot be language because I understand English".

"Mirror, mirror, on the wall"

Lande indicated that she would like feedback that provided her with insights into the course expectations or assisted her in making meaning of the course content:

> Sometimes we don't see what other people see. We only have the one perspective and feedback can actually make you see those things that you were not aware of. This is not necessarily a mistake on your part. Feedback can come in and show you other views that you are were not thinking about or aware of.

It was clear from my conversations with Lande that her growing awareness of the role of feedback in developing a voice and identity related to her work was raising her expectations of feedback and she

was beginning to find the simple marks and occasional sparce comments that she shared with me to be insufficient.

Conclusion

This chapter, the final of the findings chapters, considered the stories of Bourney and Lande. They both had examples of an understanding of feedback as being about correction of that specific text rather than as helping the student to make meaning and take on practices. At times this felt punitive, whereby feedback was about punishing the student for "bad behaviour". Lande initially had little to say about her experiences of feedback, but during our conversations, she developed a strong sense of the role feedback could play. She was quite happy to take responsibility for her side of the academic compact but increasingly saw the need for more detailed feedback which would stimulate her to think better and deeper. In the next and final chapter, I pull together my main findings that have emerged from the engagements I had with my five participants and consider what this offers in terms of a response to the research question and what might be done in the university to address the issues raised.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The five participants

This narrative study built a critical reflection on feedback as a means of enabling epistemic justice from the stories of five young women, so I will start this concluding chapter with a brief reflection on their participation. These five participants informed me that they wanted to be Foundation Phase teachers from a young age. Narrative inquiry, as discussed in Chapter Four, supports an idea that the temporality of experiences influences some of the decisions we make in our lives and the contexts in which we operate, and this was true for the participants. Their desire to become teachers was inspired by their experiences they had while they were still at school, both positive and negative. As I discussed in Chapter Four, this study enabled the participants to reflect on their experiences of feedback while they were studying at university. Participants then came to understand the contribution that feedback had on their studies, and they went to seek it because they understood the contribution that feedback makes while they were learning to become teachers.

While participants in this study initially understood feedback from a surface learning point of view, this study allowed them to reflect on what feedback could be like and what action they need to take to try and get feedback and make it meaningful for themselves (Gan, Hu, Wang, Nang, & An, 2021). Bumblebee in particular raised concerns about their practice of feedback when they will be qualified and practising teachers. They expressed their intention to seek feedback while they were studying at university to become teachers. This study's contribution to the participants is that they reflected on the nature feedback and understood that they needed to provide and to use feedback more

meaningfully. Participants benefited in several ways as this study was in progress. They understood that they could not ignore feedback, and they needed to pay attention to feedback.

Narrative Inquiry, as discussed in Chapter Four, supports an understanding that experiences are temporal but have significance after they are over. The reflections on feedback which my participants shared with me and which I have shared in this thesis included looking into the future and imagining how they could use feedback in their own teaching practice. Bumblebee's complaints indicate that she was concerned that feedback practice at university did not prepare her for teaching practice. Kgase and Lande indicated that the five of them had an advantage over their peers by being exposed through this study to the significance of feedback as a pedagogical practice. While this may be the case, being part of this study would not be enough, in my view, to prepare participants for future feedback practice. This study offered participants a reflective space through their conversations with me, but we did not engage win depth with *how* more meaningful feedback might be offered. Nonetheless, the reflection processes the participants engaged in through providing me with data helped them to look into the future and imagine how they could use feedback in their own teaching practice.

Limitations of the study

As discussed earlier, narrative inquiry research supports a small sample size. Initially I hoped that I would have at least ten undergraduate student participants, who might have represented diverse composition of students' race, gender and other forms of identity. It is also possible that these diverse representations could have offered me a wider spectrum of experiences, contexts and stories of feedback. However, the resultant small sample size and having participants of one race and gender in many ways allowed for the richness of the study. It also allowed me to reflect on the extent to which there are very different student experiences within any one group of students, even if that group looks homogenous from the outside. It was clear that sharing particular demographic indicators did not mean that they shared understandings of feedback or the literacies needed to use it meaningfully.

I explained earlier that I could only have conversations with participants when I was in Makhanda for Doc-weeks. I had planned to have ongoing conversations with participants through WhatsApp messages and journal entries (see Appendix C). Unfortunately, these two data sets did not yield much data that I could use meaningfully. The WhatsApp proved to be more useful simply as a means of staying connected and making logistical arrangements for meeting, rather than as a mode of data collection.

This study focused on Bumblebee, Lande and Marsha who were in their second year of study, Kgase and Bourney who were in their first year of study. This might have been limited because I could not attract student teachers who were in their last year of their study and this could have yielded different feedback experiences, different stories and different findings. However, the nature of narrative inquiry is such that no study would guarantee representation across an entire programme. Rather, the analysis of feedback experiences of just five participants has enabled a reflection on larger issues of feedback more generally.

The findings that a research project generates can help in structuring intervention strategies to attend to the problem of the research. However, transferability of research findings is not always possible because the sampling strategies and the size of the sample do not give enough room to accommodate all other aspects that might contribute to the research. As discussed earlier Narrative inquiry research considers a small sample size and a study of particular experiences as shown in this study. The findings in this study might not be transferred to other settings. For instance, Marsha, Bourney and Bumblebee came from female headed households, but their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds were very different, including differences in their prior schooling. Their experiences of feedback were also different. While other researchers are invited to "use the findings in making comparisons with their own work" Kelly (2012:381), the goal was not transferability of findings but rather an opening up of principles and considerations related to the study phenomenon, that is feedback (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The Feedback Triangle

In this concluding chapter, I refer back to the feedback triangle with which I began Chapter Three. As indicated, Yang and Carless' feedback triangle (2013) includes the content of feedback, the affective social and interpersonal dimension and the organisation and management structural dimension.
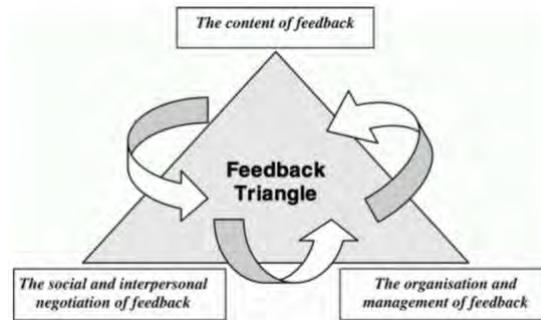
The content of feedback: hermeneutical justice and redistribution

Yang and Carless (2013) argue that the cognitive dimension of feedback concerns the content of the feedback and the learning techniques or actions that are open for participants to adopt in response to this feedback. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven showed that the content of feedback that my participants received rarely encouraged them to act on it. The bulk of the feedback was in the form of corrections on their wording rather than engagement with their meaning. Participants often could not recognise the learning techniques and approaches that might enhance their work. Participants also often misunderstood the importance of understanding the feedback message (Hattie & Timperley 2007; Wisniewski, Zierer, & Hattie, 2020) especially in our initial conversations, where they dismissed feedback as equating to marking or spelling and grammar corrections which were of little interest given the assignment was now finished. Since the feedback typically focused on the surface levels of grammar (see Chapter Five), the ways in which knowledge is made and the literacy practices by which it is disseminated were often unclear to students even after they had received feedback Consequently, the agency of participants was generally not activated, and their participation as knowers was also constrained (Walker, 2020; 2020; Nieminen, Tai, Boud, & Henderson, 2021).

Such feedback might increase chances for a hermeneutical lacuna (as discussed in Chapter Two). In the long-term, hermeneutical lacunae might prevent participants from sharing "a common set of knowledge such as beliefs, values, concepts and principles, as well as methodologies and skills for investigating disciplinary problems and practising in the profession" (Yang & Carless, 2013:287). In this understanding, a hermeneutical lacuna exacerbates hermeneutical marginalisation because participants might be unable to carefully navigate the epistemic setting armed with the relevant resources they need. In this case, parity of participation might not be achieved because the sharing of knowledge and resources was limited. In the end, a hermeneutical injustice is likely to occur

because the participants might fail to make meaning of teaching literacies for themselves. Furthermore, it is important to consider that since participants were studying to become teachers, they might not be able to practice feedback as teachers in meaningful ways and use feedback to encourage their learners to gain epistemic access (Lotz-Sistka, 2009).

Social and interpersonal dimension: testimonial justice and recognition

The social-affective dimension of feedback (Yang & Carless, 2013) relates to how students felt on receiving the feedback. While there were instances where they felt affirmed, the participants also reported feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. Kgase and Lande actively tried to overcome this by going to seek feedback from academics where they believed it to be lacking.

The findings in Chapter Five suggest that the power that feedback exerts on participants as social and epistemic agents might influence the trust they had in the feedback and might affect the relationship of trust between participants and the academics (see also Fricker, 2007; Origgi, 2008). Yang and Carless (2013:298) argue that the "power imbalance in the teacher-student relationship might seem inevitable considering the dual teacher role as the assessor and facilitator of learning". But a necessary power difference between the parties does not necessarily result in negative emotions regarding feedback. Reflection was argued, in this thesis, to be central to the development of agency and appropriate use of feedback. Feedback that is embedded in the power imbalance might negatively influence participants' reflection process at some, if not all, levels of reflection (see Chapter Three).

The structural dimension: developing feedback literacies

The structural dimension in this study, refers to the dual role of feedback as a hermeneutical resource and as an entry point into external hermeneutical resources to specific practices. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, feedback could act as a hermeneutical resource and encourage participants to use feedback dialogues to build knowledge through participation, shared understanding, and collective interpretation of the specific literacy practice the assignment promotes. As discussed in Chapter Six, absent and unclear feedback, which uses symbols and praises participants' work but does not really engage with it, might fail to act as a hermeneutical resource and an entry point into external hermeneutical resources. In the participants' shared experiences it seemed that feedback is unlikely to encourage participants' reflective processes at the various levels of reflection as discussed in Chapter Two (Ryan, 2013; Bharuthram, 2018).

In addition to this, the findings in Chapter Six suggest that rubrics are assessment tools that can be understood as an extension of feedback or 'a friend' of feedback. In this understanding, feedback

and rubrics are a dialogical reflection of each other. This approach can move the design of rubrics from the category of a formulaic tick-box to become an extension of and part of the feedback dialogical process (Cockett & Jackson, 2018). The design of the rubric can also move feedback from being a practice that focuses on surface levels of learning. If feedback through rubrics are designed as a dialogical reflection, participants would not only learn from feedback of one particular assignment, feedback would prepare them for future assignments and when they shall have left the university to practice as teachers (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Nieminen et al., 2021). But this would require that rubrics, like any other approach to feedback, was focused on enhancing epistemic access with epistemic justice.

This study argues that feedback is in part a practice of modelling and that student teachers need feedback to prepare them as future practitioners of feedback. In the wake of COVID-19, the teaching practice found itself in the unchartered and complex territory of online teaching and learning. As we move forward, beyond COVID-19, learning, including online learning, will require intentional and forward-looking feedback. Teachers need to design feedback opportunities that spark reflection, decision, and action-taking and be flexible, sustainable, and future-orientated because "teachers must be prepared for a future that is becoming increasingly unpredictable and fast changing" (Gravett & Kroon, 2021:12). This all requires the development of feedback literacies in both academics and students. Throughout this study, I have been at pains to note that academics work within constraints of their contexts, such as heavy teaching loads and so on. This call for better feedback literacy needs to be understood within such contexts. This is not about apportioning blame; this is about collectively improving practice.

So, what's the contribution?

Overall, the key contribution of this study is the agreement with the literature that feedback can be a very powerful pedagogical space and to argue that it has a role to play in the achievement of epistemic access, with epistemic justice. For feedback to play this powerful role, both students and staff will need 'feedback literacy'. Literacy here is meant in terms of Street's ideological model (see Chapter Three) whereby a set of literacy practices are seen to be context-dependent and to be imbued with ideological value and tied to people's identities. To be 'feedback literate' would then mean being able to see feedback as more than correction and instead seeing it as a dialogical space for making the expectations of the course explicit and opening them up to challenge. The success of feedback as a pedagogical practice *for* learning (and not just as part of the measurement *of* learning) depends on all parties understanding its complex and generative possibilities (Carless & Boud, 2018; Malecka, Boud, & Carless, 2020; Carless & Winstone, 2020).

Feedback needs to be dialogical to enable epistemic access and justice to occur. Dialogical feedback needs to engage students in conversations around different approaches, different understandings, and different knowledges that they take on in their studies. It is also potentially a space for engagement with the knowledges that students may bring (Ajjawi & Boud, 2018). In this respect, feedback enables students to "listen to others, dispute with others and offer points of view that will enable others to adjust their own points of view - they will learn what it means to be critical" (Waghid, 2012:110).

The participants made clear their growing understanding of the benefits of dialogical feedback in the conversations we had over two years. While much of the literature on feedback is focused on whether this should be written or verbal, on a draft or final task, and so on, a key finding of this study was that it needs to be focused on learning rather than correction. Dialogical feedback can be written or given verbally (Mulliner & Tucker, 2017). The advantage with written feedback is that it allows a structured and a paced reflection process that includes the levels of reflection (Ryan, 2013). The advantage of verbal feedback is that it allows an immediate check on understanding and an ability to monitor the affective nature of the feedback and responses to that feedback. But in the end, the issue is whether it is dialogical – directed at an educational process.

Feedback literacy and reflection

For feedback to function in this dialogical way, directed at learning, it needs to involve a high level of reflection. Feedback processes that include a process of reflection can encourage students in general to discover for themselves if they can interpret and act on the expectations of the assignment task and engage with the feedback. Secondly, students can try to make sense and meaning, and enact the norms and values that the assignment task promotes through the process of reflection. The expectation of the assignment task and the norms and values of the assignment task promote practices specific to a field (Dawson, Carless, & Lee, 2021). Such engagement can move students' understanding of assessments from an instrumental focus on them as course requirements to be submitted by a deadline to their understanding them as learning opportunities. For these reasons, the use of feedback and the development of feedback literacy cannot be separated from the design of the curriculum and the course.

Feedback cannot be another workshop that students have to go through or that academics attend once- off. Developing feedback literacy needs to be understood as part of more extensive teaching, learning and assessment development (James, 2014). Importantly, feedback literacy needs to foreground the following ideas:

1. Feedback literacy needs to foreground the idea of enabling epistemic access. It needs to make literacy practices explicit and encourage students to make sense of complex concepts. Feedback needs to encourage student engagement with their work rather than being focused on correction of that work.

2. Feedback needs to foreground the idea of encouraging students to discover for themselves why their work is wrong and adopt strategies to take appropriate actions to make corrections. It needs to open dialogue rather than shut-down errors.

3. Feedback needs to foreground the idea that feedback is a reflective practice which needs to integrate the various levels of reflection to encourage students to take actions that can show that they indeed acted on feedback meaningfully. This would entail all parties also being cognisant that feedback is affective in nature. While there is always going to be some discomfort in getting critical feedback that challenges the students' thinking or criticizes their current work, this needs to be undertaken within an ethic of care, whereby students are supported to both take on and to challenge the practices of the field.

All this shows that feedback cannot be considered as the transmission of information from academics to students (Nicol, 2010). Feedback is a hermeneutical resource that can lead students to other relevant hermeneutical resources. In this way, when academics give feedback, they need to take into consideration that there will be some students who still need to develop feedback literacies and there will be those who are feedback literate.

Feedback in this respect considers that the content, the message, or the advice is clear. The person providing the feedback needs to consider receiving the feedback and check whether this will be meaningful and useful in guiding the student. Feedback also needs to include the approaches and strategies that students could adopt to enhance their work. In this understanding, the design of feedback is targeted to students' learning needs, rather than to the correction of the current task. It is important to consider integrating, organising, and managing such feedback in the assessment process of the task. I propose a model that could assist with the developing feedback literacies that puts emphasis on the role of feedback, and that includes the process of reflection and the levels of reflection.
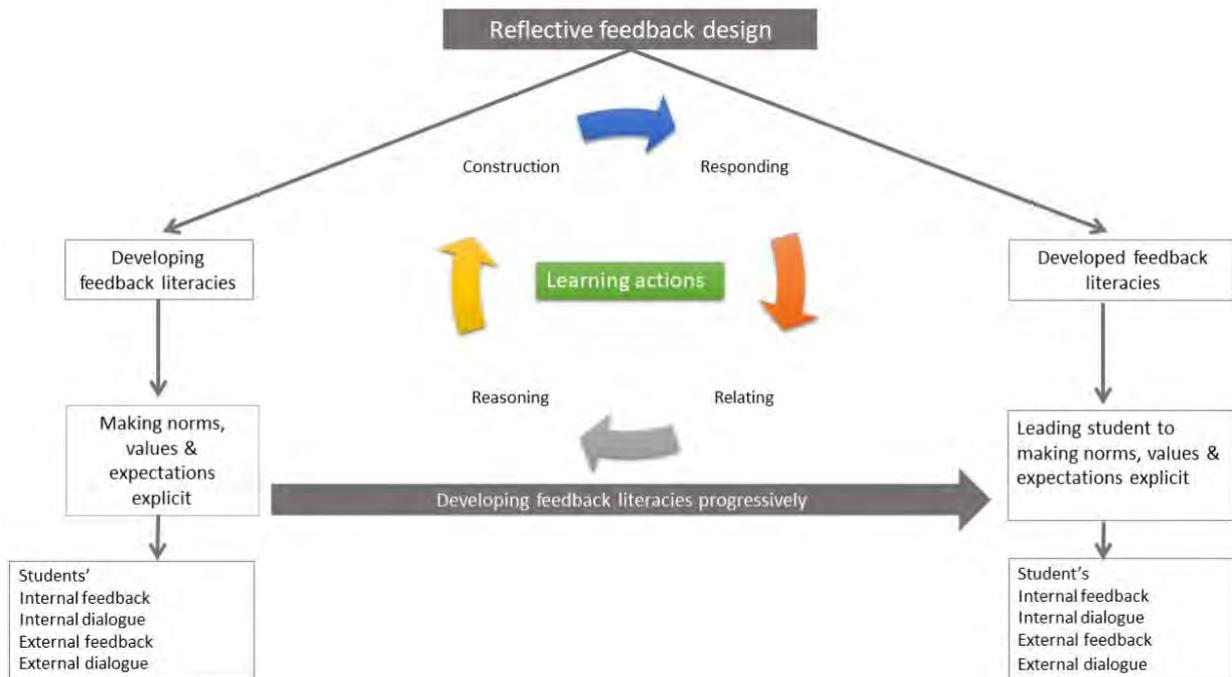
Figure 23: informed by Freire (1970); Yang and Carless, (2013); Ryan (2018); Bharuthram (2018); and Nicol (2021)

The development of feedback literacy works from the understanding of the ideological model (Street 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006, see also Chapter Three), whereby feedback is likely to recognise the agency of students in general as knowers (Orakci, 2021). Feedback is likely to require students to participate in the feedback process. Developing feedback literacies within an ideological understanding can also encourage students to adopt sense-making and meaning-making processes influenced by their contexts, experiences, knowledge, and understandings of the norms and values that the new literacy practice appreciates (Gee, 1999).

In light of the discussion above, I recommend developing feedback literacy initiatives for academics that considers the following:

- The role of feedback as suggested in the model.
- The four levels of reflection as suggested by Ryan (2018).
- The elements that demonstrate students' agency levels of reflection as suggested in the model (Nicol, 2021).
- The learning actions students might take; which are made up of possible learning strategies, approaches, techniques or methods that students might take to act on feedback.
- The relationship between feedback and student's agency as shown in the model.

Such initiatives would not be 'once-off' but should support academics to understand the concept of epistemic access and epistemic justice and the role that feedback can play in this regard. It should include considerations of what this would look like in practice and how to curriculate this into the assessment process. And it should support academics to nurture feedback literacy in their students too.

Feedback practice and ethics of care

Reading and writing practices at university are ideological; this means that they are not a neutral set of skills. Furthermore, we bring our identities to them. This means, as discussed in Chapters Three, Five and Six, that we need feedback that recognises the affective nature. While feedback literacy is needed to assist academics to provide feedback that is enabling and developmental, and that does not paralyse students and make them feel worthless, students also need feedback literacies to engage with feedback with maturity. The whole idea of feedback literacy is that feedback is not about correcting a particular piece of work, especially at the surface levels of grammar and spelling, but needs to engage with the idea that each assessment piece builds an entire repertoire of knowledge (van Heerden et al., 2016; Wilmot & McKenna, 2018). Students, after all, are knowers in their own right, and they can participate in the feedback literacy space in their capacity as knowers (Fricker, 2003, 2007).

While there will always be elements of discomfort in university study, and this is often central to learning, as a social practice, feedback needs to foreground the ethic of care. Feedback literacy development could consider building-in Tronto's (1989; 2010) elements of the the ethics of care: attentiveness, responsibility, competence, responsiveness and trust.
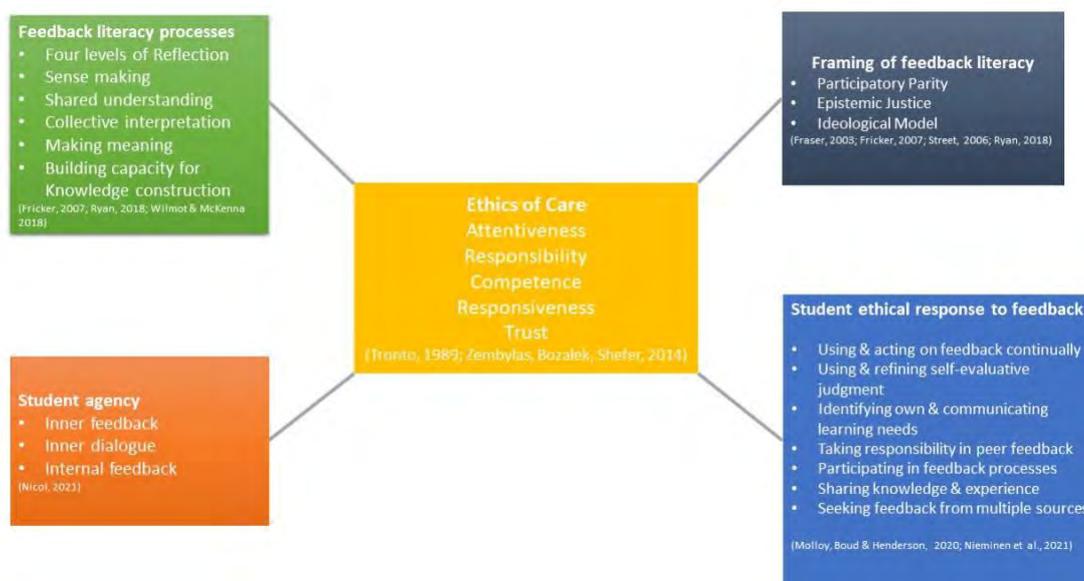
Figure 24: Feedback literacy integrating Ethics of Care (Tronto, 1989; 2010; Zembylas, Bozalek, & Shefer, 2014)

A hopeful doctoral contribution: Looking at feedback as pedagogical practice through lenses of Participatory Parity and Epistemic Justice

Many studies on feedback as a pedagogical practice look specifically at a formal pedagogical function of feedback. Thanks to the analytical lenses discussed in Chapter Two, I was able to make sense of participants' narratives with a clear focus on feedback interaction that was given in a small section of assignment tasks that participants made available for my study. These lenses allowed me to study feedback beyond pedagogy to consider social justice.

While Fraser's norm of Participatory Parity generally focuses on large systemic concerns, the diffractive reading of Fraser through Fricker, who generally focuses more directly on lived experiences of epistemic agents, proved to be generative in this study. These lenses allowed me to make sense of participants' narratives of their feedback experiences and interpretations and explain if these feedback enabled them to gain epistemic access.

These lenses also allowed me to recommend that, in general, students need to be seen as socio-epistemic agents who have social status and who are knowers and can participate in the epistemic space of literacy and disciplinary practices in their capacities as knowers (Fraser, 2003; Fricker, 2003). Feedback then needs to demonstrate participatory parity by creating conditions for the redistribution of knowledge through dialogue and engaged participation. Such feedback can enable students to share understandings and collective interpretation of the norms of literacies in the various disciplinary practices (Molloy, Boud, & Henderson, 2020; Winstone et al., 2020). In this respect, students can

sustain their participation in the epistemic space of disciplinary knowledge and its related literacy practices.

As I discussed earlier, this study focused on five participants who were all black and female. Further narrative research might be useful to understand experiences of feedback from other sub-populations such as different fields of study or along multiple lines of race and social class, and students who are in their last year of their study, and from male students. All these studies might point out different understandings of feedback and enhance strategies of developing feedback literacies across higher education in South Africa.

Epilogue

I started this thesis with a personal reflection on my relationship to 'the university' as a child and then as a young woman. So many years later, I am now a mature woman, and my geographical framing has expanded beyond the trips I used to take with my mother to downtown Johannesburg. I am familiar with the sprawling city and the many worlds that were unfamiliar to me when I was little girl. I studied from a Teacher's upgrading diploma to a Master's Degree at the University of Johannesburg, the erstwhile Rand Afrikaans University. I no longer looked out of the bus window at the university campus but walked proudly among its buildings. Now, whenever I go there, the campus does not feel like a foreign land. I grew to the extent of working as an academic support practitioner at UJ (and this framed my positionality, as discussed in Chapter Four).

An additional, somewhat unexpected and appreciated outcome of my study, has been the extent to which the five participants developed their own feedback literacies through the conversations they had with me. Bumblebee, in particular, was concerned about their practices of giving feedback when they will be qualified and practising teachers. Hence participants expressed their intention to seek feedback while they were studying at university to become teachers. Participants reflected on their feedback experiences and established an understanding that that they needed to act on feedback more meaningfully. They understood that they could not ignore feedback, and they needed to pay attention to it. Feedback, seemingly, would sustain learning in the short and long term as participants learn to become teachers (Carless D. , Salter, Yang, & Lam, 2010). Participants, therefore, benefited in several ways as this study was in progress. As the study was winding-down, Lande informed me that

she is paying attention to how she gives feedback to learners during her teaching practice experiences in a local school.

My study also gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own practice. I work as a Learning Development Specialist and my primary role is to support academics to develop study material. Central to my role is giving academics feedback about their learning material. This study allowed me to consider how I give feedback to my colleagues about their study material. I ensure that the feedback I give opens up spaces for conversation. I am not a specialist in the many disciplinary fields of the academics that I work with and this gives me an opportunity to ask questions and suggest approaches and strategies from a novice point of view. I put myself in the shoes of students and raise awareness to academics of how students might perceive the learning material (Nussbaum, 1997). These conversations also enabled me to understand my own feedback. I have also noticed that academics who are assigned to me again on learning material development tasks, remember the previous feedback conversations we have had and refer to these and this in turn influences future development. I try to keep all of these interactions dialogical – open for ongoing interaction and engagement – rather than only corrective.

As I reflect back on my PhD journey and all that I have learned, I hope that my contribution goes some small way to ensuring that all students have an opportunity to engage with dialogical feedback that allows for the redistribution of powerful knowledge and recognition for who they are, what they have learned and what they can contribute.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance
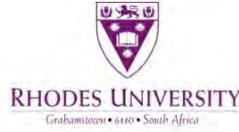
CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH, TEACHING AND LEARNING
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19 January 2016

To whom it may concern

Approval of proposal for Doctor Of Philosophy (Higher Education) and ethical clearance:

Name: Bella Vilakazi   Student Number: 14V8682

Provisional title: Formative Feedback to students in the context of social justice: A pedagogic practice for access to knowledge.

Supervisor: Professor Sioux McKenna

Ethical Clearance Number: **2015.10.3**

This letter confirms the approval of the above proposal at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on 7 December 2015.

In the event that the proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes, the approval of the proposal by the committee constitutes ethical clearance. This was the case with this proposal and the committee thus approved ethical clearance.

Yours sincerely

Prof S. McKenna
Chairperson of Education Higher Degrees Committee
s.mckenna@ru.ac.za

Appendix B: Letter to the Registrar

Re: application for permission to collect data at Rhodes University in the Faculty of Education

My name is Bella Vilakazi and I am a registered PhD scholar at Rhodes University. My student number is 14V8682. I write this letter to request permission to collect data at Rhodes University in the Faculty of Education for a PhD study. My proposal was accepted by Higher Degrees Committee and it is here attached.

The research topic is; Feedback to students in the context of social justice: A pedagogic practice that influences access to knowledge.

The purpose of this research is to study student experiences of feedback. Feedback is understood as lectures' comments on students' assignments, students' views, questions or arguments during contact sessions, lectures or discussion sessions.

I intend to collect data from undergraduate student teachers who are registered at Rhodes Faculty of Education.

Research data will be generated in the following ways

1. There are going to be group and individual conversations to talk about feedback. The conversation will be held for about ninety minutes and will voice recorded.

2. I plan to study the feedback that lecturers give to students as they assess their assignments you after they have marked or assessed your assignments. In order for me to do this, I will ask the students who agreed to my study participants to give me permission to keep copies of these assignments. I will not make the assignments available to anyone will return them when after I have done an analysis.

3. I will create a WhatsApp group in which all the participants in this study can discuss feedback experiences as the research goes along and to keep contact with me. The group discussions will also be analysed. The discussions will be protected and will not be made available to anyone. They will be deleted after the study is completed.

4. Research participants will be requested to write their experiences of feedback in a journal (A3 hard copy notebook) which I will provide. These journals will be marked with students' pseudo names.

The benefit that students might gain from taking part in this study is they will have an opportunity to talk with other participants and discuss what feedback is and what it means, how it affects them, how

they experience it in their own terms, and how it influences the knowledge that they are learning as they become teachers. Secondly, their participation in this study can contribute to how feedback might be understood and used in higher education. Thirdly, they can use this time to imagine the kind of feedback that they need and also imagine the kind of feedback that they might give to their leaners when they are practicing teachers. All this will enable me to write their anonymous narratives which can contribute to the feedback body of knowledge.

The informed consent form is attached to this letter which students can complete and sign should they agree to take part in this study. Below I give list participants' rights and how I intend to protect their identity.

Participants' rights and protection, confidentiality, privacy and identity.

- I will make every effort to protect the participants' confidentiality, privacy and identity. The information that they will share with me will be stored in a safe and secure place for no longer than two years after this study or related papers are published. I will hereafter destroy the data.
- I will protect their identity and not write anything that might make it easy for anyone to identify them. This protection includes the time when this study and related papers will be released to the public.
- It is the participants' right to leave or withdraw from the study should they wish to. This will not be at any cost, penalty or consequence to them.
- The participants have a right to request to see the information during the data collection and after it has been analysed.
- The participants have a right to contact me anytime should they have any concerns during or after the study. My contact details are listed below. They also have a right to contact my Supervisor. Her contact details are listed below.

Bella Vilakazi (PhD scholar)   Professor Sioux McKenna (Supervisor)

BP Vilakazi
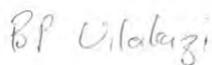
Cell phone number	:	076 117 9712	s.mckenna@ru.ac.za
Office number	:	011 471 2258	
Email address	:	vilakbp@unisa.ac.za	

Appendix C: Invitation to participate in my study

Dear student

I would like to invite you to take part in my PhD study.

My name is Bella Vilakazi and I am a registered PhD scholar at Rhodes University. My student number is 14V8682. The research topic of my study is. is; Feedback to students in the context of social justice: A pedagogic practice that influences access to knowledge.

The purpose of this research is to study your experiences of feedback while you are learning to become a teacher at Rhodes University. The practice of feedback is commonly understood as a practice that you use to improve your assignment tasks.

If you accept my invitation, your role is to help me to understand how feedback encourages you to gain epistemic access. Epistemic access means getting the knowledge enables you to learn to become a teacher.

My intention is to collect data from you through group and individual conversations. I will also request that you make some of the assignments that your lecturer has already marked and where you were given feedback. I also going will ask you give me permission to make copies of your assignments. I will keep your assignments in a safe place in my home where no one will have access to them. All our conversations will be voice recorded. I will keep the recordings in a safe place where no one can gain access to them.

I will create a closed WhatsApp group to enables us to communicate with each other and to arrange the time and venues for our conversations. I live in Johannesburg and I will inform you well in time when I will be in Grahamstown.

I will also request that you reflect on your feedback and use the WhatsApp groups to write your reflections of feedback.

I will give you a notebook that you can also use as a journal where you will write your reflections of feedback. We will discuss these reflections when I am in Grahamstown.

The informed consent form is attached to this letter and I request that you complete the consent form if you agree to take part in this study. The list below includes your rights and how I plan to how protect your identity, confidentiality and privacy.

- The data that you will share with me will be stored in a safe and secure place for no longer than two years after this study or related papers are published. I will hereafter destroy the data.

- I will protect your identity and not write anything that might make it easy for anyone to identify you. This protection includes the time when this study and related papers will be released to the public.

- You have the right to leave or withdraw from the study should they wish to. This will not be at any cost, penalty or consequence to you.

- You the right to access the voice recording and the transcripts during the data collection phase and after the data has been analysed.

- You have the right to contact me anytime should they have any concerns during or after the study. My contact details are listed below.

- You also have the right to contact my Supervisor. Her contact details are listed below.

Bella Vilakazi (PhD scholar)	Professor Sioux McKenna (Supervisor)
Cell phone number: 0761179712	s.mckenna@ru.ac.za
Work number: 011 471 2258	
Email address: vilakbp@unisa.ac.za	

Thank you,

Bella Vilakazi

Appendix D: Informed consent form

Informed Consent Letter

Research topic	:	Feedback to students in the context of social justice: A pedagogic practice that influences access to knowledge.
Ethical Clearance Number	:	2015.10.3
Researcher	:	Bella P Vilakazi
		Rhodes University
		Student number: 14V8682
		Contact address:
		41 Naboom Street
		Wilro Park
		Roodepoort
		1729
Researcher Contact detail		076 117 9712
		011 471 2258 (work)
		vilakbp@unisa.ac.za
Supervisor Contact detail	:	Professor Sioux McKenna
		s.mckenna@ru.ac.za

Dear Participant,

Please read the consent form carefully and insert a tick in the boxes next to each sentence. By inserting a tick, you agree to be part of this study. Please refer to the invitation letter about your rights to be a participant in this study.

Informed Consent Letter

I, (Name).. (Surname)...,

Have read and understood the purpose of this study, my ethical rights and how the researcher will protect my identity. I agree voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

I consent to the following:

I give the researcher permission to hold group and individual conversations with me.	
I give the researcher permission to make copies of my assessed or marked assignment for analysis.	
I trust that the information that I will give during the conversations and on WhatsApp will be kept anonymous and will not made available to anyone.	
I trust that my identity will be protected and nothing will be used that can make it easy for anyone to identify me.	
The information that I share with the researcher will be stored in a safe and secure place for no longer than two years after this study or related papers are published.	

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I understand that in the unlikely event that the information I have provided is requested by legal authorities, the researcher may be required to comply.	
I am aware and understand that there will always be a risk of a group or cohort identification in research reports. However, the researcher will make every attempt to protect my identity.	
I have a right to request to see the information that I have provided and how the data was analysed during and after the data collection	
I have a right to contact the researcher or her supervisor at any time should I have any concerns during or after the study.	
I agree to make myself available at agreed times and venues according to the study procedure and duration as indicated in the invitation letter	
My participation is voluntary and I have a right to leave the study if I wish to, freely at no cost or consequence to me.	

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature:

Researcher's signature:

Supervisor's signature:

Date: 2017/04/24